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The Drama



VICTORIAN EDITION

The Drama

ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE
AND INFLUENCE ON
CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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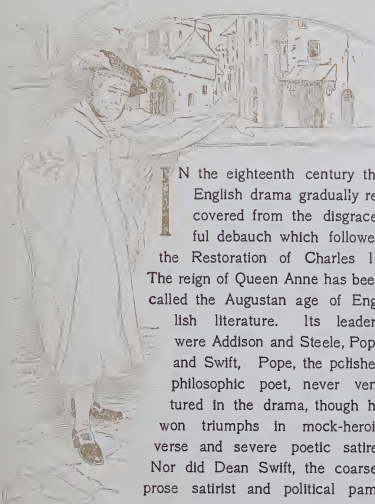
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Prologue



IN the eighteenth century the English drama gradually recovered from the disgraceful debauch which followed the Restoration of Charles II. The reign of Queen Anne has been called the Augustan age of English literature. Its leaders were Addison and Steele, Pope and Swift, Pope, the polished philosophic poet, never ventured in the drama, though he won triumphs in mock-heroic verse and severe poetic satire. Nor did Dean Swift, the coarser prose satirist and political pam-

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phleteer. But Steele, who in his *Tattler*, inaugurated the periodical essay, endeavored with sentimental comedies to recall the stage to decency and decorum. But the public taste had been infected, and mercenary playwrights still responded to the popular demand for sensuality. Strange to say, among the notorious offenders were two women, Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Centlivre. Addison, who enjoys perennial fame in his *Spectator*, won immediate success with his *Cato*, the finest English example of the pseudo-classical tragedy, then in vogue on the French stage. Though all the critics loudly applauded the innovation, and Voltaire pronounced it "the first reasonable English tragedy," other dramatists shrank from attempting an original of the same kind. They were content to translate directly from Racine and Voltaire, and some of their reproductions won popular favor.

In the middle of the century, sturdy Dr. Samuel Johnson rose to be the Great Khan of literature. Best known by his *Dictionary* and by Boswell's record of his life and conversations, he followed Addison's example not only in his *Rambler*, but in his solitary tragedy *Irene*, though in these his

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success was fair, but not conspicuous. Goldsmith, less pretentious, won permanent favor with his charming comedies. Little Garrick, the great actor, who reformed the stage and introduced Shakespeare revivals, also succeeded as a dramatic author. *The Clandestine Marriage*, in which he was assisted by Colman, is here given in full. About the same time, Samuel Foote, by his wit and versatility, raised farce to a higher level, so as to make it worthy of mention in an historical sketch of the drama.

In this century the Italian and German operas contended with the native drama for possession of the stage, and the genius of Handel carried the oratorio to victory. A notable feature of the struggle was John Gay's "Newgate Pastoral" of *The Beggars' Opera*, a burlesque farce interspersed with songs set to popular airs. Its success called forth a long series of similar productions.

The latter part of the century was enlivened with the sprightly comedies of the two George Colmans and the brilliant masterpieces of Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. These favorites are so universally familiar that it has been considered advisable, as well as

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more polite, to make way for the admirable play of Mrs. Cowley, *The Belle's Stratagem*.

It is singular, to say the least, that the most famous tragedy of the century was written by a Scotch Presbyterian minister, Rev. John Home, who by it won applause, but lost his pulpit. The merit of his work, *Douglas*, certainly entitles it to a place among our Classics.



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English Drama.

PART III.

I.

The Eighteenth Century Drama.

That an undoubted decline in the art of writing comedy is observable when we come to the eighteenth century, there is no denying. The reason is to be sought in the history of social progress. The talent remained, but the demand for comedies such as those of the Restoration had fallen off. Manners change, tastes follow suit, and it is doubtless less easy to be piquant in the treatment of questionable situations when the public taste frowns on a past fashion. A higher quality of talent is required, if topics of a commonplace order are to be as sparkingly presented on the stage, as were the now impossible plots and dialogue of the seventeenth century.

The world of comedy, says Charles Lamb, in commenting on the immorality of the English drama, was always an artificial world, and was never regarded as supplying patterns of manners or morals. Neverthe-

less the effect of such representations was to lower and corrupt the national taste, while the fact that no pursuit was then so profitable to an author as writing for the stage, was in itself injurious to imaginative literature. It must not, however, be forgotten that the decline of comedy cannot fairly be dated further back than the time of Goldsmith, Sheridan, the Colmans and a few other masters of vivacious and witty dialogue.

Colley Cibber.

Colley Cibber, actor, dramatist and laureate, is better known for his version of *Richard III*—which held the stage until replaced by Sir Henry Irving's edition—than for anything of his own composition. The son of a rich and famous sculptor, he was carefully educated at school and university, and after serving in the bloodless campaign which placed William III on the throne, came to London, where a craze for things histrionic caused him to enroll himself as an apprentice in Betterton's company of actors. He served without salary, as he says, for "full three-quarters of a year," after which he received ten shillings a week, and for his clever rendition of some minor parts was advanced, first to fifteen shillings and then to a pound a week. And now he thought himself rich, supporting a wife and family on this stipend, for he had long since expended his slender patrimony.

Cibber's first comedy, *Love's Last Shift*, was not a success, though Vanbrugh deemed it worthy of a sequel, for which he wrote his *Relapse*. While praised by sev-

eral of the critics, it was damned by Congreve, who said it contained only attempts at wit. It was not until after several years that Cibber produced another play; but this one was his best, and written with a view to the appearance of Mrs. Oldfield as the heroine. *The Careless Husband* was its title, and its most striking scene is said to have been suggested by an episode in the life of the notorious countess of Macclesfield. In 1712, with Collier, Wilks and Dogget, he became a patentee of Drury Lane theatre, where, in this year, Addison's *Cato* was produced under his management. He next adapted the *Nonjuror* from Molière's *Tartuffe*, receiving from George I, to whom it was dedicated, a present of two hundred guineas. On the death of Mrs. Oldfield, in 1730, followed soon afterward by that of Wilks, Cibber, who had now been named Laureate, sold his share in the theatre and retired from the stage, only appearing thereafter on rare occasions. His last performance was after his quarrel with Pope, which resulted in his elevation as the hero of the *Dunciad*. At seventy-four he took final leave of the stage as Panulph in his own poor tragedy of *Papal Tyranny*, dying soon afterward as full of worldly honors as of years.

Cibber's reputation has suffered greatly from the acrid censure of Pope and the rough scorn of Johnson. It is certain, however, that he was by no means an unamiable character, and that he was deficient neither in wit, sense, tact nor feeling. The little passages of dramatic criticism and reflection scattered through his *Apology*, while they prove his perspicuity and breadth of experience, are perhaps the most delicate and subtle

of their kind in the literature of his time; while the fact that his version of *Richard III* should have kept the stage for more than a century is of itself no mean proof that his dramatic ability and instinct were remarkable. As a dramatist, he has neither the broad humor and strong comic vein of Vanbrugh, nor the fine diction and the masterfulness of Congreve, nor the frolicsome gayety and airy fancy of Farquhar. His characters are flat; his plots are neither natural nor well conducted; his dialogue is often flippant. He attempted, moreover, to extract a highly moral end from his sympathetic studies of social weakness and impurity, and the result is by no means happy.

Theobald.

Lewis Theobald will survive as the butt of Pope's *Dunciad* when, as a playwright, a litterateur, a translator, and even as a Shakespearean commentator, he will be entirely forgotten. The son of an attorney, Theobald studied for the profession of law, which he never practised. He was a man with literary impulses, but without any special ability; as a student and commentator, he might have led a happy and contented life, had not the vanity of the literary idea led him into a false position. His *Persian Princess* and his *Electra* gained no distinction; but *The Double Falsehood* had a certain vogue, partly from Theobald's pretense that the greater part of the play was by Shakespeare. A series of papers which appeared in *Mist's Weekly Journal* served only to add to the number of his enemies, whose

criticisms intensified his own censorious tendencies, so that he ventured to attack the most eminent literary man of the day in his *Shakespeare Restored, or a Specimen of the Many Errors as Well Committed as Unamended by Mr. Pope in His Edition of This Poet*. Two years later the censor was himself eastigated severely, and, as the man to whom *The Dunciad* was dedicated, he had long an unenviable notoriety. In the matter of editing Shakespeare, however, he had the advantage over his powerful rival; for when, in 1733, Theobald published his edition of Shakespeare in seven volumes, that of Pope was almost discarded. Theobald wrote other dramas besides those already mentioned, and translated plays from Sophocles and Aristophanes, and made a rendering of Plato's *Phædo* and a partial translation of the *Odyssey*; but for none of these things is he now remembered.

James Thomson.

James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, was a native of the Scottish border country, born in 1700 at Ednam, Roxburghshire, then his father's parish, and reared at a distance from the social influences and literary fashions that helped to form and fix the manner of the classical school, the monotony of which he was the first to break. Amidst the bare breezy hills and glens of a border parish, his youth was safe against the ascendancy of the taste established in the metropolis. Jedburgh school and Edinburgh university gave him his book learning of the ordinary type; and he was for-

fortunate enough to have intellectual neighbors who opened his eyes to the poetic side of nature, and encouraged him in verse-making. The teacher from whom he learned most was a man named Riccaulton, a graduate of Edinburgh, who had taken to farming, but was afterward persuaded to enter the church, and made some contributions to theological literature. This scholarly enthusiast taught Latin to the boys of Jedburgh in an aisle of the church, and encouraged Thomson in his poetical turn by example as well as precept. We have the poet's own acknowledgment that the first hint of *The Seasons* came from a striking dramatic poem by Riccaulton, entitled *A Winier's Day*. As a schoolboy Thomson wrote verses, and at the university he continued the practice, but his early efforts were not particularly promising. He was intended for the ministry, and was for five years a student of divinity; but in 1725 he determined to follow his friend and class-fellow David Mallet to London, and seek his fortune there. Through the influence of Lady Grizel Baillie, herself a song-writer, he obtained a tutorship in the family of Lord Binning; but the plain-looking and plain-mannered poet had not the adroitness of his friend Mallet, and he gave up the post after a few months. It was while he lingered in the neighborhood of Barnet, without employment, without money, with few friends, saddened by the loss of his mother—his father had died when he was eighteen—that Thomson conceived the idea of the first of his poems on the seasons, *Winter*.

This appeared in the spring of 1726, when a pub-

lisher, named Millan, gave him three guineas for it. The tradition is that it attracted no attention until a literary clergyman, Whatley, chanced to take it up from a bookseller's counter, and at once rushed off to the coffee-houses to proclaim the discovery of a new poet. The town received the discovery with acclamation; in another month a second edition was called for. No time could have been better suited for the appreciation of Thomson's striking qualities; they were so entirely unlike what the public had for many years been accustomed to. The fresh treatment of a simple theme, the warm poetical coloring of commonplace incidents, the freedom and irregularity of the plan, the boldness of the descriptions, the manly and sincere sentiment, the rough vigor of the verse, took by surprise a generation accustomed to witty satire and burlesque, refined diction, translations from the classics, themes valued in proportion to their remoteness from vulgar life. Thomson at once became famous, and, his naturally easy temper roused to full exertion, vigorously followed up his success with *Summer* and an *Ode to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton*. *Spring* was completed and published in 1728; *Autumn* in 1730, and was followed presently by a handsome edition of the whole four *Seasons*.

Meanwhile, drawn into the ardent political strife of the time, he had produced his *Britannia*, and early in 1730 had made his first attempt as a dramatist with *Sophonisba*. From that time there was a manifest slackening either in his will or in his power to produce. He was appointed tutor to the son of Sir Charles Tal-

bot, travelled with his pupil on the Continent, and in 1733 obtained a small sinecure in the court of Chancery. It may have been this removal of the spur of necessity that made him linger over his poems; but it is fair to suppose that the rigid taste of the time for finish, which he had unconsciously defied with triumphant results, began to gain an ascendancy over him, and that he wrote less because he was cramped by fear of the critics. None of the other *Seasons* have the same large and careless freedom as *Winter*; *Autumn* especially, the last of them, is much more labored, and his revisions and enlargements in successive editions show an anxious ambition after the finish of the classical school. However this may be, he hesitated long over his next poem, *Liberty*, the first part of which was published in 1734, and the conclusion in 1736. He intended it to be his masterpiece, but with all his care and pains, it has fallen into oblivion. In 1737 he lost his sinecure by the death of his patron, but was recompensed by a pension from the prince. Poverty, rather than natural fitness or inclination, drove him again to dramatic composition. *Agamemnon* was produced with indifferent success, followed by the masque of *Alfred*, written by Thomson in conjunction with Mallet, and containing the great song, *Rule Britannia*. Then came *Tancred* and *Sigismunda*. The *Castle of Indolence*, his last work, was not published till the year of his death, 1748, but he had been long engaged upon it. The poem is full of character and humor, with here and there passages of elaborately rich description; it is fuller than any other of the per-

sonality of the poet, of the good-nature, generosity, and solid wisdom which gained him the affection of so many friends; but still it is in the *Seasons*, and especially in the first of them, *Winter*, that Thomson is seen at his best and strongest.

George Colman the Elder.

George Colman, essayist and dramatist, usually called the Elder, and sometimes George the First, to distinguish him from his son, was born at Florence, where his father was stationed as resident at the court of the grand duke of Tuscany. After a preliminary course of study at a private academy, he was sent to Westminster school, which he left in due course for Christ Church, Oxford. Here he made the acquaintance of Bonnel Thornton, the parodist, and together they founded *The Connoisseur*, a periodical which reached its 140th number, but which Johnson said "wanted weight." After taking the degree of master of arts he came to London, was entered at Lincoln's Inn, and was duly called to the bar.

In 1760 Colman produced his first play, *Polly Honeycomb*, which met with great success, and this was followed by *The Jealous Wife*, a comedy rich in borrowed excellencies. The death of Lord Bath placed him in possession of an annuity, which gave him leisure to produce his excellent metrical translation of the plays of Terence. *The Clandestine Marriage* was written jointly with Garrick, whose Lord Ogleby was one of his finest impersonations. This is given in full elsewhere in this

volume. In 1767 he succeeded to a second annuity, whereupon he purchased a fourth share in the Covent Garden theatre, and was appointed acting manager, being also elected into the famous Literary Club, then nominally consisting of twelve members. After seven years of management he sold his share in the great playhouse to Peake, and afterward purchased of Foote, then broken in health and spirits, and near his end, the Little theatre in the Haymarket. Attacked with palsy at the age of fifty-two, his brain became affected, and he lapsed gradually into idiocy. Besides the works already cited, Colman was author of some thirty-five plays, of an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and of many parodies and occasional pieces.

George Colman the Younger.

George Colman the younger passed, as did his father, from Westminster school to Christ Church, Oxford, and after a course at King's college, Aberdeen, was finally entered as a student of law at the Temple, London. While at Aberdeen he published a poem in honor of Charles James Fox, called *The Man of the People*, and at the age of twenty produced, at his father's playhouse in the Haymarket, his first play, *The Female Dramatists*, for which *Roderick Random* supplied the materials. It was unanimously condemned, but his next attempt, *Two to One*, was entirely successful, and the young Templar's vocation was decided on.

The failing health of the elder Colman obliging him to relinquish the management of the Haymarket the-

atre, the younger George succeeded him, at a yearly salary of £600. On the death of the father the patent was continued by the son, but difficulties arose in his way, lawsuits and pamphlets accumulated round him, and he was forced to take sanctuary within the Rules of the King's Bench, where he resided for many years. Released at last through the kindness of George IV, who had appointed him exon of the Yeomen of the Guard—a dignity disposed of by Colman to the highest bidder—he was made examiner of plays by the duke of Montrose, then lord chamberlain. This office, to the disgust of all contemporary dramatists, to whose MSS. he was as illiberal as severe, he held till his death. Colman's comedies, which have never been collected, are a curious mixture of genuine comic force and platitudinous sentimentality. Several of them continued to be acted until recent years, but their popularity was due rather to the humor of the actors who adopted them as vehicles for display than to any intrinsic vitality. The best of them are *John Bull*, for which the author received the largest sum that had thus far been paid for any single play, *The Poor Gentleman* and *The Heir-at-Law*. Colman, whose conversational powers were remarkable, as Byron has recorded, was also the author of much coarse and so-called humorous poetry, which in its time was extremely popular.

Improvement in Morals.

With the elder Colman begins a new period in English comedy; for its morals were greatly improved and

much was done in the way of refined and original characterization. True that in *The School for Scandal* the moral tone is not to be altogether commended; but it is a cleaner play than the cleanest of the Restoration period or of the age of Queen Anne. About this time the English public appears to have fallen into what Macaulay terms "one of its periodical fits of morality;" but it was, in truth, rather a change in taste and custom than in actual morality; for the question of verbal grossness or indecency had very little to do with the question. In the Restoration era, and long afterward, English gentlewomen were accustomed to use words and speak of matters in a way that would not now be tolerated in a smoking-room. It is well that they had now outgrown the coarseness of former generations; but it does not follow that they had really improved in moral tone.

Richard Cumberland.

Among those in whom the change is most noticeable is Richard Cumberland, son of a bishop and of the youngest daughter of the great jurist, Jeremy Bentham. At the age of seven he was sent to the grammar-school at Bury St. Edmunds, and while rising to the head of his school, had already begun, as he says, "to try his strength in several slight attempts toward the drama." He was removed to Westminster, then at the height of its fame, and had among his schoolfellows Warren Hastings, Churchill, Cowper and the elder Colman, passing in his fourteenth year to Trinity College, Cambridge, of which his grandfather was one of

the most celebrated masters. Graduating as tenth wrangler, he was elected to a fellowship, which he held until his marriage, when, as was the custom at Oxford and Cambridge, he was disqualified from holding this office. He held several appointments under the Halifax and Sackville administrations, though they appear to have brought him no great profit, a later mission to Spain leaving him several thousand pounds out of pocket, which the government refused to pay, notwithstanding that, as he says, "he wearied the door of Lord North till his very servants drove him from it." Finally he was retired on half-pay, and spent the last years of his life in London, where he died in 1811.

Memoirs.

Cumberland's literary productions are spread over the whole of his seventy-nine years, and are extremely voluminous; but it is only by his contributions to the drama, and perhaps by his *Memoirs*, that he is likely to be remembered. The latter contain some interesting reminiscences of persons of note, as Garrick, Foote and Goldsmith, Bubb Dodington, Single-speech Hamilton and Lord George Sackville; but the accuracy of some of the anecdotes is not beyond suspicion. The work exhibits its author as an amiable egotist, careful of his own reputation, given to prolixity, and not remarkable for wit, though a good observer of men and manners. The uneasy self-absorption which Sheridan ridiculed in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary in *The Critic* is apparent enough throughout the biography, but pre-

sents itself in no offensive form. One of the most valuable features is the incidental criticism of actors, of whose merits Cumberland was an excellent judge.

A Prolific Dramatist.

Cumberland was hardly warranted in the conjecture that no English author had yet equalled his list of dramas in point of number; but he was extremely prolific as a dramatist. He wrote about thirty-five regular plays, to which he added four operas and a farce. Among these the best known, upon which the literary reputation of their author virtually rests, belong to what he was pleased to term "legitimate comedy," and to that species of it known as "sentimental." The two terms are in point of fact mutually contradictory; but Cumberland asserted, with some show of reason, that in his sentimental comedy he was following in the footsteps of the new comedy of the Greeks; he was less willing to confess that he was in truth an imitator of native models, for he was by no means the creator in our dramatic literature of the species he so assiduously cultivated. The essential characteristic of these plays is the combination of plots of domestic interest with the rhetorical enforcement of moral precepts, and with such comic humor—usually but little—as the author possesses. These comedies are primarily, to borrow his own phraseology, designed as "attempts upon the heart;" and British hearts, he says, are "hearts that feel." He takes great credit to himself for weaving his plays out of "homely stuff, right British druggie," and for eschew-

ing "the vile refuse of the Gallic stage;" on the other hand, he borrows, perhaps unconsciously, from the sentimental literature of his own country, including Richardson, Fielding and Sterne. The favorite theme of his plays is virtue in distress or danger, but safe of its reward in the fifth act; their most constant characters are men of feeling and young ladies who—to quote a retort of Goldsmith's upon the sentimental dramatists—are either prudes or coquettes.

Cumberland's comic power—such as it was—lay in the invention of comic characters taken from the "outskirts of the empire," and professedly intended to vindicate from English prejudice the good elements in the Scotch, the Irish, and the colonial character. For the rest, patriotic sentiment—such as became one who in his old age was a major of volunteers—liberally asserts itself by the side of general morality. If Cumberland's dialogue never approaches the brilliancy of Sheridan's, and if his characters have about them that air of unreality which in his *Retaliation* Goldsmith satirized with so exquisite a grace, the construction of the plots is as a rule skillful, and the situations are contrived with what Cumberland indisputably possessed—a thorough insight into the secrets of theatrical effect. In this respect, at all events, he was, as has been claimed, the "Terence of England"—that there is hardly one of his principal plays in which the audience is not allowed to enjoy that most thrilling of theatrical emotions which is produced by a meeting between parent and child after long years of separation or ignorance of one another's existence. It should be added that,

though Cumberland's sentimentality is often wearisome, his morality is generally sound; that if he was without the genius requisite for elevating the national drama, he did his best to keep it pure and sweet; and that if he borrowed much, as he undoubtedly did, it was not the vicious attractions of other dramatists of which he was the plagiary.

Cumberland's Plays.

Cumberland made his *début* as a dramatic author with a tragedy, *The Banishment of Cicero*, of which the plot, though inspired by Middleton, rather strikingly deviates from history. It was published in 1761, after being rejected by Garrick, and was followed, four years later, by a musical drama, *The Summer's Tale*, which was performed for a few nights and afterward compressed into an afterpiece. The first attempt at sentimental comedy was *The Brothers*, which has more vigor than some of its author's later works; its theme is inspired by *Tom Jones*; its comic characters are the jolly old tar, Captain Ironsides, and the henpecked husband, Sir Benjamin Dove, whose progress to self-assertion is perhaps as comic a notion as Cumberland ever executed, though, as he confesses, not altogether an original one. The epilogue paid a compliment to Garrick, who accordingly interested himself in the production of Cumberland's second and by far most successful comedy, *The West-Indian*. The hero is a young scapegrace fresh from the tropics, "with rum and sugar enough belonging to him to make all the water in the Thames into punch"—a libertine with generous instincts, which

in the end prevail. The chief comic character is Major O'Flaherty, an honest Irish adventurer, in whom Cumberland took no little pride, but who is in truth neither particularly Irish nor particularly humorous. The play was received with the utmost favor; it was afterward translated into German by Boden, and Goethe acted it at the Weimar court. The next important piece was *The Fashionable Lover*, a sentimental comedy of the most pronounced type, with an ill-used heroine and a man of feeling exhibiting the very prurience of sentimentality. "Who dreams," he exclaims, "that I am the lewd fool of pity, and thou my pandar, Jarvis, my provider?" The comic characters are an honest Scotch steward, whose Scotch is, if anything, more doubtful than O'Flaherty's Irish, and an antiquarian Welsh tutor, Doctor Druid, less creditable to the "outskirts of the empire" represented by him. *The Cholerick Man*, founded on the *Adelphi* of Terence, is of a similar type, the comic element rather predominating, but philanthropy being duly represented by a virtuous lawyer called Manlove. Among subsequent comedies may be mentioned *The Natural Son*, in which Major O'Flaherty, now divested of all humor, again makes his appearance; *The Impostors*, a comedy of intrigue noteworthy for the absence of sentiment, but marred in one of the scenes by an indelicacy of feeling which is unlike Cumberland, the heroine, "a pleasant child of nature," being admirably suited to Mrs. Jordan; *The Box Lobby Challenge*, a protracted farce, where there is likewise no sentiment; *The Jew*, an essentially serious play, creditable to Cumberland's

good feeling, and highly effective when the character of Sheva is played as it was by the great German actor Doring; *The Wheel of Fortune*, which has a vague resemblance to Kotzebue's *Stranger*, and in which the character of the misanthrope Penruddock, who cannot forget but learns to forgive, was a celebrated part of John Kemble's, while the lawyer, Timothy Weasel, was made comic by Suett. Then there are *First Love*; *The Last of the Family*; *False Impressions*, in which, as the hero instead of the heroine is the injured innocent, the sentimentality is less formidable; *The Sailor's Daughter*; and a *Hint to Husbands*, which, unlike the rest, is in blank verse. These appear to be all the comedies by Cumberland printed in his lifetime.

The *Carmelite*, a romantic domestic drama in blank verse, furnished some effective scenes for Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble as mother and son. *The Mysterious Husband*, another romantic drama, has an intricate plot, cleverly contrived, in which the chief character, Lord Davenant, a bigamist, turns prematurely remorseful, and is ultimately got rid of by suicide. There was also an indifferent tragedy, *The Battle of Hastings*, with a number of minor pieces and plays that were posthumously printed, one of which, *The Sibyl, or the Elder Brutus*, was afterward worked up, with other matter, into a very successful tragedy for Edmund Kean.

Goldsmith's Good-natured Man.

Of Oliver Goldsmith little need here be said; for his life and life-work are sufficiently familiar to the public.

Emboldened by his success as a poet and novelist, he turned his attention to the drama, and wrote the *Good-natured Man*, which met with a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refusing to produce it at Drury Lane, it was brought out at Covent Garden, but was coldly received. Nevertheless, it put money in the author's purse; for he cleared by his benefit nights, and the sale of the copyright, the good round sum of £500, which was five times as much as he received for the *Vicar of Wakefield* and the *Traveller* together. Yet the *Good-natured Man* is dead, while the novel and the poem will die only with the English language. The plot of the comedy, like all Goldsmith's plots, is very ill constructed; but some of the passages are exquisitely ludicrous, much more so, indeed, than at that time suited the tastes of audiences. Sentimental comedy was then in vogue, and a canting, mawkish play, entitled *False Delicacy*, was the rage of the town. Comedies, it was said, caused more tears than tragedies, and a pleasantry that moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was condemned as low and vulgar. Thus it is not strange that the very best scene in the *Good-natured Man*, that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and his underlings in full court dresses, should have been mercilessly hissed, and omitted after the first night.

She Stoops to Conquer.

When, a few years afterward, *She Stoops to Conquer* was submitted to the manager of Covent Garden, it was

with the greatest difficulty that he was induced to bring it out. The sentimental comedy was still in fashion, and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. The *Good-natured Man* had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of the *Good-natured Man* was sober when compared with the rich drollery of *She Stoops to Conquer*, which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries were in a constant roar of laughter, and if any bigoted admirer of the sentimental school ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of "turn him out" or "throw him over." Later generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night, and this was that the play was the masterpiece of an age rich in masters of dramatic art.

Sheridan.

Except for his remarkable genius for borrowing money, the drama was for Richard Brinsley Sheridan his only means of support before he entered Parliament; for the few thousand pounds that his wife brought him were quickly expended in furnishing his Portman square mansion "in the most costly style" and in entertaining the fashionable world. His extravagance, however, was no mere recklessness, but the result of a deep-laid and daring policy, carefully premeditated and carried out with singular boldness and judgment. Its results were sufficiently evident at the production of his first comedy, *The Rivals*, the success

of which was largely due to his social standing and popularity.

The Rivals.

The Rivals, it is said, was not very favorably received on its first night at Covent Garden, owing to its length and to the poor playing of the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger; but the defects were remedied before the second performance, and the piece at once took that place on the stage which it has never lost. It was the last season but one of Garrick's long career, and the current story preserved by Moore is that the run upon Covent Garden was such as to alarm the veteran of Drury Lane and drive him to extraordinary exertions to counterbalance the attractions of the new play. This seems to be a myth, natural enough in the circumstances, but unfounded in fact, for we have contemporary testimony that Drury Lane was never more crowded than during the last years of Garrick's management, when it was known that he intended to retire from the stage. In fact, there were crowded houses at both theatres, and Sheridan, though bearing his brilliant success lightly, proceeded at once to take the tide at the flood. A few months later he produced *St. Patrick's Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant*, a lively farce, and in the course of the year, with the assistance of his musical father-in-law, he wrote the comic opera of *The Duenna*, the great theatrical success of the winter of 1775-76, running even longer than *The Beggar's Opera*, which up to that time had the longest run on record. Meanwhile, with an eye to the profits of theatrical management, Sheridan

was in negotiation with Garrick for the purchase of his share in Drury Lane. The bargain was completed in June, 1776; the sum paid for the half-share was £35,000, of which Sheridan contributed £10,000. There is nothing to show where the money came from, and much wonder has been expressed on the subject; but after all it is not so very remarkable that the most brilliant dramatist of his time, in all the credit of unparalleled success, should have been able to borrow such a sum with the best theatrical property in London to offer as security. There is a tradition that Garrick advanced the money or let it lie at interest; anyhow, the loan could not have appeared at the time a very risky speculation. Two years afterward Sheridan and his friends bought the other half of the property for £45,000.

Drury Lane Theatre.

From the first the direction of the theatre would seem to have been mainly in Sheridan's hands. It was opened under the new management in February, 1777, with a purified version of Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, under the title of *A Trip to Scarborough*. This is printed among Sheridan's works, but he has no more title to the authorship than Colley Cibber to that of *Richard III*. His chief task was to remove indecencies, and he added very little to the dialogue. Astonishment has been expressed that he should have fallen back on an old play instead of writing a new one, and the fact is quoted among the proofs of his indolence. But the new manager, apart from the engagements of a popular man of fashion,



probably found work and worry in his novel task of organization sufficient to leave him little leisure for composition. Vanbrugh's drama was probably chosen for the simple reason that it suited his company. Possibly also he wished to make trial of their powers before entrusting them with a play of his own.

The Scandalous College.

The School for Scandal was produced little more than two months afterward. Lady Teazle was played by Mrs. Abington, who had taken the part of Miss Hoyden in the *Trip*, and was now much improved by six months' experience of marriage and town life. The actors who personated the brothers Surface had been tried in the *Trip* in opposite characters, Charles playing Townley, while Joseph played Tom Fashion. It looks as if shrewd managerial caution was responsible for the delay quite as much as indolence, though the former may at least have been in Sheridan's mind the plausible excuse for the latter. There are tales of the haste with which the conclusion of *The School for Scandal* was written, of a stratagem by which the last act was coaxed from the author by the anxious company, and of the fervent "Amen" written on the last page of the copy by the prompter, in response to Sheridan's "Finished at last, thank God!" But, although the conception was thus hurriedly executed, we know from Sheridan's sister that the idea of a "scandalous college" had occurred to him five years before in connection with his own experiences at Bath. His difficulty was to find

a story sufficiently dramatic in its incidents to form a subject for the machinations of the character-slayers. He seems to have tried more than one plot, and in the end to have desperately forced two separate conceptions together. The dialogue is so brilliant throughout, and the auction scene and the screen scene so effective, that nobody cares to examine the construction of the comedy except as a matter of critical duty. But a study of the construction brings to light the difficulties that must have worried the author in writing the play, and explains why he was so thankful to have it finished and done with. After all, he worried himself needlessly; for *The School for Scandal*, though it has not the unity of *The Rivals*, nor the same wealth of broadly humorous incident, is universally regarded as Sheridan's masterpiece. He might have settled the doubts and worries of authorship with Puff's reflection: "What is the use of a good plot except to bring in good things?" The vitality of a play depends mainly on its good things in the way of character, incident and happy sayings, and to a very limited extent on their relevance to any central plan.

The Critic.

The third and last of Sheridan's great comedies, *The Critic*, was produced in 1779, *The School for Scandal* meantime continuing to draw larger houses than any other play every time it was put on the stage. *The Critic* is perhaps the highest proof of Sheridan's skill as a dramatist; for in it he has worked out, with perfect success for all time, a theme which, often as it

has been attempted, no other dramatist has ever succeeded in redeeming from tedious circumstantiality and ephemeral personalities. The laughable infirmities of all classes connected with the stage—authors, actors, patrons and audience—are touched off with the lightest of hands; the fun is directed not at individuals, but at absurdities that grow out of the circumstances of the stage, as naturally and inevitably as weeds in a garden. It seems that he had accumulated notes, as his habit was, for another comedy to be called *Affectation*. But apparently he failed to hit upon any story that would enable him to present his various types of affectation in dramatic interaction. The similar difficulty in his satire against scandal, of finding sufficiently interesting materials for the scandal-mongers, he had surmounted with a violent effort. This other difficulty he might have surmounted, too, if he had had leisure to “sit and think” till the happy thought came. But his energies were now called off in a different direction. His only dramatic composition during the remaining thirty-six years of his life was *Pizarro*, produced in 1799—a tragedy in which he made liberal use of some of the arts ridiculed in the person of Mr. Puff. He is said also to have written more of *The Stranger* than he was willing to acknowledge.

Tragedy in the Eighteenth Century.

Tragedy was often attempted in England in the eighteenth century, but a writer of the first rank never made his appearance. Dramatists laid aside the pompous

manner of Dryden, however, and that at least was an improvement. Nicholas Rowe was an honest admirer of Shakespeare, and his modest reverence for this superior genius was rewarded by a return to nature and truth. The traces of imitation are not to be mistaken; the part of Gloster in *Jane Shore* is even directly borrowed from *Richard III.* Rowe did not possess boldness and vigor, but was not without sweetness and feeling; he could excite the softer emotions, and hence in his *Fair Penitent*, *Jane Shore* and *Lady Jane Gray*, he has successfully chosen female heroines and their weaknesses for his subjects.

Nicholas Rowe.

Rowe was descended from an old Devonshire family, but was born in Bedfordshire in 1674. He inherited an income of three hundred pounds a year. After school years in Westminster, under the famous Dr. Busby, he entered as a law student in the Middle Temple, which profession he soon gave up for that of literature. His first play, *The Ambitious Stepmother*, was produced when he was twenty-five years old. It was followed by *Tamerlane*, a patriotic composition in which the virtues of William III were lauded under the disguise of Tamerlane and the vices of Louis XIV were denounced in the person of Bajazet. The popularity of this drama soon declined, but it continued to be acted once every year, on the anniversary of the landing of the Dutch prince at Torbay. His next production, *The Fair Penitent*, long retained the favorable reception which marked its first appearance, and

was pronounced by the great critic of the eighteenth century one of the most pleasing tragedies which had ever been written. It was through its success that the name of the principal male character, Lothario, became significant in popular language of the manners and habits of a fashionable rake. After writing two more tragedies, long since forgotten, Rowe tried his hand on a comedy, *The Biter*. Much to the author's surprise, his attempt in this new direction proved a failure, but Rowe recognized the justice of the verdict sufficiently to abstain from risking a second disappointment. His last plays were *Jane Shore* and *Lady Jane Gray*, the former, from the popularity of its subject and the elegance of its language, finding a permanent place on the boards; for, like all Rowe's tragedies, it was marked by intensity of emotion set forth in graceful diction, and was well adapted for stage effect. Others of his dramas find favor in the study for their style and reputation.

Rowe excelled most of his contemporaries in the knowledge of languages; for he was acquainted more or less thoroughly with Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. The last of these tongues he is said to have acquired on the recommendation of Harley and with the expectation that he would afterward be rewarded by some high office. When, however, he reported his new acquisition to the minister, he was met with the dry remark—"How I envy you the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original!" Notwithstanding this disappointment, Rowe enjoyed many lucrative posts during his short life, among them that

of poet laureate. He died at the age of forty-four, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Addison.

Addison undertook to purify English tragedy by bringing it into compliance with the rules of good taste. It might have been expected from so competent a judge of the ancients that he would have attempted to approach the Greek models, but he produced only a tragedy after the French model. *Cato* is a feeble and frigid piece, almost destitute of action, without one truly overpowering moment. Addison has so narrowed a great and heroic picture by his timid manner of treating it, that he could not, without foreign intermixture, even fill up the frame. Hence, he had recourse to the traditional love intrigues; if we count well, we shall find in this piece no fewer than six persons in love: Cato's two sons, Marcia and Lucia, Juba and Sempronius. The good Cato cannot, therefore, as a provident father of a family, avoid arranging two marriages at the close. With the exception of Sempronius, the villain of the play, the lovers are one and all somewhat silly. Cato, who ought to be the soul of the drama, is hardly ever shown to us in action; nothing remains for him but to admire and to die. It might be thought that the stoical determination of suicide, without struggle and without passion, is not a fortunate subject; but less depends on the subject than on correctly apprehending it. Addison was induced, by a wretched regard to unity of place, to leave out Cæsar, the most

worthy contrast to *Cato*; and in this respect even Metastasio has managed matters better. The language is pure and simple, but without vigor; the rhymeless iambic gives more freedom to the dialogue, and an air somewhat less conventional than it has in the French tragedies; but in stirring eloquence, *Cato* remains far behind them.

Addison took his measures well; he placed all the great and small critics, with Pope at their head, the whole militia of good taste, under arms, that he might excite a high expectation of the piece which he had produced with so much labor. *Cato* was universally praised, as a work without an equal. But on what foundation do these boundless praises rest? On regularity of form? This had been already observed by the French poets for nearly a century, and notwithstanding its constraints they had often attained a much stronger pathetic effect. On the political sentiments? In the single dialogue between Brutus and Cassius in Shakespeare there is more of the Roman way of thinking, more of republican energy, than in all of *Cato*.

It is doubtful whether this piece could ever have produced a really powerful impression, but its reputation has certainly had a prejudicial influence on tragedy in England. The example of *Cato*, and the translation of French tragedies, which became every day more frequent, could not, it is true, render universal the belief in the infallibility of the rules; but they were held in sufficient consideration to disturb the conscience of the dramatic poets, who consequently were extremely timid in availing themselves of the prerogatives they in-

herited from Shakespeare. On the other hand, these prerogatives were at the same time problems; it requires no ordinary degree of skill to arrange, with simplicity and perspicuity, such great masses as Shakespeare brings together: more of drawing and perspective are required for an extensive fresco painting than for a small oil picture. In renouncing the intermixture of comic scenes, when they no longer understood their ironical aim, playwrights did perfectly right: Southerne still attempted them in his *Oroonoko*, but in his hands they exhibit a wretched appearance. With the general knowledge and admiration of the ancients which existed in England, we might have looked for some attempt at a true imitation of the Greek tragedy; no such imitation has, however, made its appearance; in the choice and handling of their materials they show an undoubted affinity to the French. Some poets of celebrity in other departments—Young, Thomson, Glover—have written tragedies, but no one of them has displayed any real tragical talent.

Domestic Tragedy.

English tragic writers of this period have now and then had recourse to familiar tragedy to assist the barrenness of imagination; but the moral aim, which must exclusively prevail in this species, is a true extinguisher of genuine poetical inspiration. They have, therefore, been satisfied with a few attempts. *The Merchant of London* and *The Gamester* are the only plays of this kind which have attained any great reputa-

tion. *George Barnwell* is remarkable from having been praised by Diderot and Lessing as a model for imitation; but it has long been deservedly laid on the shelf. We might draw a very different conclusion from this piece from that which the author had in view, namely, that to prevent young people from entertaining a violent passion, and being led at last to steal and murder, for the first wretch who spreads her snares for them, we ought, at an early period, to make them acquainted with the true character of courtesans. There is no more edification to be drawn from a drama of this kind than in the histories of the malefactors, which in England were usually printed at executions; the latter contained, at least, real facts instead of awkward fictions.

Influence of Garrick.

Garrick's appearance forms an epoch in the history of the English theatre, as he chiefly dedicated his talents to the great characters of Shakespeare, and built his own fame on the growing admiration for his poet. Before his time, Shakespeare had only been brought on the stage in mutilated and disfigured alterations. Garrick returned, on the whole, to the true originals, though he still allowed himself to make some very unfortunate changes. The only excusable alteration of Shakespeare is to leave out a few things not in conformity with the taste of the time. Garrick was undoubtedly a great actor, and he excited a noble emulation to represent worthily the great national poet. This has ever since been the highest aim of actors, and

to the example of Garrick it is largely due that to-day the English and American stage, together with that of Germany, can still boast of men whose histrionic talents are deservedly famous. Of Garrick's career and influence later and more extended mention will be made.

But why has this revival of the admiration of Shakespeare remained unproductive for dramatic poetry? Because he has been too much the subject of astonishment, as an unapproachable genius who owed everything to nature and nothing to art. His success, it is thought, is without example, and can never be repeated; nay, it is even forbidden to venture into the same region. Had he been considered more from an artistic point of view, it would have led to an endeavor to understand the principles which he followed in his practice, and attempt to master them. A meteor appears, disappears, and leaves no trace behind; the course of a heavenly body, however, ought to be delineated by the astronomer, for the sake of investigating more accurately the laws which govern its motions.

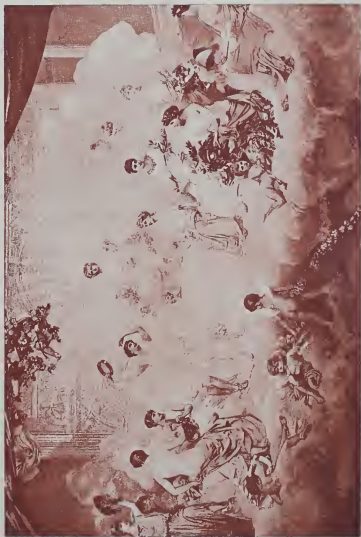
Popular Stage Pieces.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century opera absorbed in England, as elsewhere, what little vitality there remained in the pastoral drama, while to the ballet and pantomime, whose glories began at Covent Garden in 1733, forcing even Garrick to defer to their popularity, were transferred the attractions of the mask and pageant. A dangerous rival to the legit-

imate drama also arose in the burlesque, with its fatally facile form of comic art. Fielding, who utterly failed in regular comedy, produced two successful extravaganzas, with a large admixture of political and other satire. Very popular were the *Midas* and *Golden Pipin* of O'Hara, and later, in the hands of Planché, and others, this form of entertainment proved capable of satisfying a more refined taste than their successors cared to cultivate. At that time burlesque actresses wore clothes; they appeared in rôles instead of tight., and the main attractions for the audience were wit and humor in the dialogue and fun-loving vivacity in the performers.

The time had not yet come when the stage was to rely for its attractions chiefly on the display of tightly hosiered limbs. In every large city in Europe and the United States entertainment of this character is abundantly provided for those whom such things delight, the exhibition of the female form stopping short only of absolute nudity, and this only for fear of the law, as it seems, or, in England, to avoid the prohibition of the Lord Chancellor, who acts there as stage censor. As a study of anatomy or of the nude in art such shows would be well enough, were it not that they are accompanied by song and monologue and dialogue which, if not positively indecent, are so thinly veiled that the entire performance panders to the lascivious propensities of those whose tastes incline them to this form of theatrical prostitution. In these remarks it is not intended to moralize, but to point out one of the chief sources of the degradation of dramatic art. Yet it is

doubtful whether such spectacles have had any serious influence on the legitimate drama; for those who find pleasure in them are seldom found within the walls where the latter finds a home. Certain it is that the nude in dramatic, as in other forms of art, is at least tolerated even among the respectable classes of society, but it need not therefore be accompanied with vulgarity and obscenity. It is only among the prudish that the undraped or scantily draped figure is condemned *per se*; and such prudishness is often merely an evidence of innate impurity of mind. As Thackeray has well remarked, the figure attired in satins and silks may be much more suggestive of evil thoughts than that which is clad in nature's garb.



II.

The National Play-houses and Players.

The story of the English drama in the eighteenth century cannot be told or fully appreciated without taking its theatres and actors into account. The literary as well as the dramatic and personal interest centres round the three great London houses, with one or other of which every famous writer and performer had an intimate relationship. More than this, the associations of these places, and even their names, form no insignificant feature of national history. A hundred familiar incidents turn our casual attention back to some person or occurrence identified with one of these theatres. They remain as monuments of an institution which for centuries has moulded and swayed the emotions of the English people. Even now, in the opening years of the twentieth century, the familiar names of Old Drury and its neighbors have a far deeper significance than those of their juniors, however popular, can in the nature of things ever hope to acquire.

Hazlitt reminds us of an important educational utility of the stage in a characteristic passage:

"If the stage thus introduces us familiarly to our

contemporaries it also brings us acquainted with former times. It is an interesting revival of past ages, manners, opinions, dresses, persons and actions, whether it carries us back to the wars of the Roses or to the heroic times of Greece or Rome, or to the age of Charles II, in the scenes of Congreve and Etheredge—happy days, when kings and nobles led merely ornamental lives; when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no further than the choice of a sword-knot or the adjustment of a side-curl; when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing eloquence of dress. . . . A goodly company of comedians, a theatre royal judiciously managed is your true Heralds' College—the only Antiquarian Society that is worth a rush. We feel more respect for John Kemble in a plain coat than for the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack. We see in him—recalling his great characters—a stately hieroglyphic of humanity, a living monument of departed greatness, a sombre comment on the rise and fall of kings. . . . Something reminds us that 'all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.' ”

Drury Lane Theatre.

It was on the site of a riding-yard in Drury lane, and nearly upon the same spot where the present house stands, that Killigrew, after receiving his patent from Charles II, elected to raise his new theatre. We must not, however, judge the Drury lane of that day by its present aspect; it was then an aristocratic quarter of the town, wherein were to be found the residences of

the earls of Craven and Clare, the marquis of Argyll, the earl of Anglesey and other nobles, imposing structures standing in grounds and gardens. Nell Gwynne lived here in the height of her power. It was not until the close of the century that these mansions, deserted by their noble owners, fell into disreputable hands, when streets and courts and alleys began to cover the pleasancess; and by the time of Queen Anne, as we may gather from Swift and Gay, the neighborhood had become utterly disreputable.

The ground-rent of the riding-yard was £50 a year, and the cost of erecting the theatre £1,500; the dimensions of the building were 112 by 59 feet. Although the patent was granted in August, 1660, the house was not ready until nearly three years later. The opening play was Beaumont and Fletcher's *Humorous Lieutenant*; the performance was announced to commence at three precisely, and the prices were: boxes 4s., pit 2s. 6d., middle gallery 1s. 6d., upper gallery 1s.

Players at Drury Lane.

Killigrew's leading tragedians, Hart and Mohun, were men of high reputation; Hart was Shakespeare's grand-nephew, being the grandson of the poet's sister; contemporaries were enthusiastic in his praise, and it was said of him that in all comedies and tragedies he was concerned in he performed with such exactness and perfection that not any of his successors equalled him. Mohun, who had earned his title of major in the civil wars, fighting on the side of the Cavaliers, was esteemed

by the king as a tragic actor, even above Hart. Lacey, a famous Falstaff, and the original Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, mentioned in glowing terms by Pepys, was Charles' favorite actor; a picture representing him in three characters may be seen at Hampton Court. It was at Drury Lane, in 1665, that Nell Gwynne, who was a pupil of Hart's, made her first appearance as an actress in Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, and it was there, while speaking the epilogue to Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*, a few years afterward, that she first captivated the king. That very night, so the story goes, as soon as the curtain fell, he went behind the scenes and carried her off. The company also included the two beautiful Marshall sisters, Anne and Becky, with Mrs. Davenant, the romantic story of whose mock marriage with the earl of Oxford is told by De Grammont; Pepy's innamorata, Mrs. Knipp, and many others famous in their day. Colley Cibber, in his *Apology*, bears witness to the social importance enjoyed by the king's and duke's companies. "Ten of the king's company," he writes, "were in the royal household establishment, having each ten yards of scarlet cloth with a proper quantity of lace allowed them for liveries, and in their warrants from the Lord Chamberlain were styled 'Gentlemen of the Great Chamber.' Whether the like appointments were extended to the duke's company I am not certain; but they were both in high estimation with the public, and so much the delight and concern of the Court that they were not only supported by its being frequently present at their public presentations, but by its taking cognizance of their private government, insomuch that their particular differ-

ences, pretensions or complaints, were generally ended by the king's or duke's personal command or decision. Besides their being thorough masters of their art, these actors set forward with two critical advantages, which perhaps may never happen again in many ages. The one was their immediate opening after so long an interdiction of plays during the civil war and the anarchy that had followed it. What eager appetites from so long a fast must those guests have had to that high and fresh variety of entertainments which Shakspeare had prepared for them! . . . The other advantage is that before the Restoration no actresses were seen upon the English stage." Very brief was the existence of the first Drury Lane theatre, as it was burned down in January, 1672. During the rebuilding the company performed at the house in Lincoln's Inn fields, which had been abandoned by the duke's company in the preceding year upon their removal to Dorset garden.

The new Drury Lane was designed by Christopher Wren; it cost £4,000, and was opened in March, 1674; that no attempt, however, was made to rival the magnificence of the duke's house may be gathered from a prologue written by Dryden for the occasion, which opens thus:

A plain built house after so long a stay
Will send you half unsatisfied away;
When, fallen from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is designed.
You, who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace shining all with gold,
Our mean ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
And for the homely room disdain the cheer.

Cibber gives a very good idea of the arrangement of the stage, which, he tells us, projected in a semi-oval figure forward to the front bench of the pit, with side wings for the entrances in place of stage boxes, so that the whole action of the play was carried on beyond the pillars of the proscenium. In modern theatres the proscenium, on account of our elaborate scenic effects, has been virtually abolished, thus confining the dramatic action strictly within the stage frame. The form, however, was considerably altered even during Cibber's time, for the enlargement of the auditorium and the introduction of stage boxes; but he contends for the superiority of the old fashion, as the most subtle shades of facial expression could be seen, and the softest whispers and most delicate intonations of the voice could be heard and better appreciated by the spectators.

Rival Companies.

"These two excellent companies, the king's and the duke's," continues Cibber, "were both prosperous for some years, till their variety of plays began to be exhausted. Then, of course, the better actors, who were allowed to be at the king's, could not fail of drawing the greater audiences. Sir William Davenant, therefore, master of the duke's company, to make head against their success, was forced to add spectacle and music to action, and to introduce a new species of plays, since called dramatic operas, of which kind were the *Tempest*, *Psyche*, *Circe* and others, all set off with the expensive decorations of scenes and habits, with the

best voices and dancers. This sensual supply of sight and sound coming in to the assistance of the weaker party, it was no wonder they should grow too hard for sense and simple nature, when it is considered how many more people there are that can see and hear than think and judge. So wanton a change of the public taste, therefore, began to fall as heavily upon the king's company as their greater excellence in action had before fallen upon their competitors. Not to dwell too long upon this part of my history I shall content myself with telling you that Mohun and Hart, now grown old, and the younger actors, as Goodman, Clark and others, being impatient to get into their parts, and growing intractable, the audiences, too, of both houses then falling off, the patentees of each, by the king's advice, which perhaps amounted to a command, united their interests and both companies into one, exclusive of all others, in the year 1684. This union being so much in favor of the duke's company, was the cause of Hart leaving the stage, and Mohun survived not long after."

The duke's comedians endeavored to mimic Mohun's manner, when the great actor's powers were impaired by age and infirmity, a baseness which Lord Rochester reproved in the following verses:

And these are they who durst expose the age
Of the great wonder of the English stage,
Whom nature seem'd to form for your delight,
And bade him speak as she bade Shakespeare write:
These blades, indeed, are cripples in their art,
Mimic the foot, but not the speaking part.

The union of the two companies, however, did not much improve the condition of the actors. Whether it was that the great religious and political issues, which then and for many years afterward engrossed the public mind, left little room for such diversions, or whether it proceeded from an apathy for things theatrical, a reaction from the eagerness with which they had been enjoyed at the Restoration, it would be useless to discuss, but for some time previously there had been a great falling off in public patronage. Something of this seems to have been attributable to the attractions of French and Italian companies. In the epilogue written for the king's company on their visit to Oxford in 1673, Dryden says:

A French troop first swept all things in its way,
But those *Monsieurs* were too quick to stay,
Yet, to our cost, in that short time, we find
They left their itch for novelty behind.
The Italian merry-andrews took their place,
And quite debauched the stage with lewd grimace:
Instead of wit and humor, your delight
Was there to see two hobby-horses fight, etc.

Troublous Times.

To such a low ebb had theatrical business fallen in 1690 that Charles Davenant, who had succeeded to the patent rights on the death of his mother and the retirement of his brother Alexander, sold his interest in the Dorset Gardens theatre to a scheming lawyer, named Christopher Rich, for £80.

It has been previously stated in the account of Dorset

Gardens theatre that the house had been built by a subscription of gentlemen, who were called "adventurers;" these, receiving no interest for their investment, however, had ceased to trouble themselves about the affairs of the theatre. Thus did the lawyer obtain absolute power, which he used in the most unworthy manner, imposing his own terms upon the actors, who were most miserably paid. Verbruggen and Powel, both performers of the first rank, received but £1 a week each; Goodman, an excellent actor, and another named Griffin, were reduced to such straits that they had to sleep in one bed, and possessed but one shirt between them. Cibber relates how one of them, having an assignation with some fair damsel, insisted upon wearing the garment out of his turn, and how the dispute was decided in their garret at the point of the sword. On more than one occasion Goodman, who afterward married Lady Caslemaine, the discarded mistress of Charles II, took to the highway to eke out his miserable stipend.

When "the adventurers" applied for dividends, Rich evaded their claims, and, when pressed, so wearied out the suitors by every species of legal chicanery that at length he was left in undisturbed possession of the theatre. In 1695, however, the long-enduring actors revolted and laid their grievances before the court; after obtaining a personal interview with King William, who, doubtless at the intercession of his wife, a great lover of the theatre, treated them with marked kindness, they were granted a license to open the old theatre in Lincoln's Inn fields, which, since the temporary tenancy of the king's company, had been recon-

verted into a tennis court. All the principal members of the Drury Lane company, including Betterton, Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle, seceded, leaving behind only the young and inferior actors. Congreve, who then stood at the head of the dramatic authors of the time, went with them, took an active share in the management, and gave to the house his famous comedy, *Love for Love*, which proved a great success.

Jeremy Collier's Attack on the Stage.

The publication of Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*, in 1697, dealt a terrible blow at what little prosperity the theatres still enjoyed, arousing anew the old spirit of Puritanism, which had been scotched, not killed. Yet the castigation was well deserved, for the licentiousness of the stage both before and behind the curtain had become a monstrous evil. The sensation created by the book was enormous; scores of pamphlets were written refuting or defending its views, and the falling off in the audiences plainly showed that its remonstrances had struck home. At the beginning of 1699 the king's chamberlain sent an order to both play-houses calling the attention of the actors to the profane and indecent expressions often used in plays, and warning them, at their peril, not again so to offend.

During ten years Betterton and his associates performed at Lincoln's Inn fields, Congreve, who received a share of the profits, continuing to take an active part in the management. But the famous actors of the Res-

toration, both male and female, were long past their maturity, and a new generation, destined to be hardly less celebrated—Wilks, Cibber, Barton Booth, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Oldfield—was rising to take their places. In 1705 Lincoln's Inn fields was again deserted, and the company went over to Sir John Vanbrugh's new theatre in the Haymarket, of which an account will be found in its place.

In the meantime Rich, who wielded the sceptre of Drury Lane, continued to cajole and cheat as before, until another outbreak in his company took place, and the best actors among those who had remained with him after the first revolt also seceded to the new house. The rivalry between the two companies was bitter and unscrupulous; and in 1699 the grand jury of Middlesex, which, though strongly leavened with Puritanism, did not take action without sufficient cause, coupled the two theatres with the Bear Garden as public nuisances. Even the otherwise friendly testimony of Wright, who wrote his *Histrionica* in this year, goes far to confirm their judgment. "Of late," he writes, "the play-houses are so extremely pestered with vizard masks and their trade, occasioning continued quarrels and abuses, that many of the more civilized part of the town are uneasy in their company, and shun the theatre as they would a house of scandal."

Thomas Betterton.

A passing glance at the players and the literature of Drury Lane may be of interest. The house, during its

first thirty years of life, had a sharp struggle for existence. In addition to Mohun, Hart and others of the Restoration period, there remain those whom Cibber has styled "the best set of English actors yet known;" actors whose portraits he has painted in colors so vivid that they can never fade. At the head of the list stands Betterton, the friend of Tillotson, the mentor of Pope and the critic of Dryden, of whom Steele wrote in *The Tatler*, on the occasion of his funeral, "a man whom I always very much admired, and from whose actions I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature than from the arguments of the most solemn philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I have ever read." In another place this critic has said: "I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass Mr. Betterton on any of the occasions in which he has appeared upon the stage;" and again he tells us that when Betterton played Hamlet, at seventy, in manner, gesture and voice he appeared "a young man of great expectation, vivacity and enterprise."

Thomas Betterton was the son of one of the cooks of King Charles I, and was born in Westminster about 1635, eighteen years after the death of Burbage. He seems to have received a fair education, and but for the disturbing effect of the civil war, would probably have been brought up to one of the liberal professions. He was, however, apprenticed to a bookseller, who, fortunately for the future actor, took to theatrical management. Betterton was about twenty-four when he began his dramatic career, and for upward of fifty years he

seems to have held his position as the foremost actor of the day. It was fortunate, indeed, for the interests of the drama that so great an actor arose at the very time when dramatic art had virtually to be resuscitated. When the Puritans came into power and abolished the theatres, as they did every other form of intellectual amusement, for many years the drama only existed in its lowest form. It must have been, indeed, a dismal time for the people of England; with all the horrors of civil war fresh in their memory, the paternal government—for so it was styled—allowed its subjects no other amusement than that of consigning their neighbors to eternal damnation, and of selecting for themselves—by anticipation—all the best reserved seats in heaven.

When the Restoration took place, the inevitable reaction followed; society, having been condemned to a lengthened period of involuntary piety—which sat anything but easily on it—rushed into the other extreme; all who wanted to be in the fashion professed but little morality, and it is to be feared that for once, their practice did not come short of their profession. Now was the time when, instead of "poor players," fine gentlemen condescended to write for the stage, and it may be remarked that, as long as the literary interests of the theatre were in their keeping, the tone of the plays represented was more corrupt than it ever was at any other period in the history of the drama. It is something to be thankful for that at such a time, when the highly-flavored comedies of Wycherley and Congreve were all the vogue, and when the monotonous profligacy

of nearly all the characters introduced into those plays was calculated to encourage the most artificial style of acting—it was something to be thankful for that at such a time Betterton, and one or two other actors, could infuse life into the noblest creations of Shakespeare. Owing more especially to Betterton's great powers, the tragedy of *Hamlet* held its own in popularity, even against the most salacious of comedies. It was also fortunate that the same actor who could draw tears as Hamlet was equally at home in the feigned madness of that amusing rake Valentine or in the somewhat coarse humor of Sir John Brute. By charming the public in what were the popular novelties of the day he was able to command their support when he sought it for a nobler form of drama.

Betterton married an actress, Mrs. Saunderson, who was only inferior in art to her husband. Their married life seems to have been one of perfect happiness. When one hears so much of the profligacy of actors and actresses, and that they are all such very wicked folk, it is pleasant to think of this couple, in an age proverbial for its immorality, in a city where the highest in rank set an example of shameless license, living their quiet, pure, artistic life, respected and beloved by all who knew them.

Betterton had few physical advantages. If we are to believe Antony Aston, one of his contemporaries, he had "a short, thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat, short arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach." Yet the same critic is obliged to confess that, at seventy years of age, a younger man might

have personated, but could not have acted, Hamlet better. He calls his voice "low and grumbling," but confesses that he had such power over it that he could enforce attention even from fops and orange-girls. We all know how Steele and Addison admired his acting, and how enthusiastically they spoke of it in *The Tatler*. The latter writes eloquently of the wonderful agony of jealousy and the tenderness of love which he showed in Othello, and of the immense effect he produced in Hamlet.

Betterton, like all really great men, was a hard worker. Pepys says of him: This actor "is a very sober, serious man, and studious, and humble, following of his studies; and is rich already with what he gets and saves." But the fortune so hardly earned was lost in an unlucky moment; he entrusted it to a friend to invest in a commercial venture in the East Indies which failed most signally. Betterton never reproached him, and he never murmured at his ill-luck. The friend's daughter was left unprovided for; but Betterton adopted the child, educated her for the stage, and she became an actress of merit, and married Bowman, the player, afterward known as "The Father of the Stage."

In Betterton's day there were no long runs of pieces, but had his lot been cast in these times he might have been compelled to perform, say Hamlet, for three or four hundred nights. Like Edmund Kean, he may be said to have died upon the stage; for in April, 1710, when he took his last benefit, as Melantius, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, he was suffering tortures from gout, and had almost to be carried to his

dressings room. Within forty-eight hours he was dead. He was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey with every mark of respect and honor.

Betterton was the author of several dramatic works, which, though now forgotten, were popular in their time. The favor in which he was held is attested by the fact that his last benefit, when past his threescore and ten, netted more than \$2,500, an enormous sum for the days when the foremost of actors thought themselves well paid with \$25 or \$30 a week.

It may here be remarked that the censure said to have been directed against Betterton for the introduction of scenery is the prototype of that cry, which we hear so often nowadays, against over-elaboration in the arrangements of the stage. If it be a crime against good taste to endeavor to enlist every art in the service of the stage, and to heighten the effect of noble poetry by surrounding it with the most beautiful and appropriate accessories, then must the greatest of actors plead guilty to that charge; but every great dramatist who has ever lived, from Æschylus downward, has always endeavored to have his plays put upon the stage with as good effects and as handsome appointments as possible.

It was seriously suggested to Sir Henry Irving by an enthusiast that costumes of his own time should be used for all Shakespeare's plays. "I reflected a little on the suggestion," says Irving, "and then I put it to him whether the characters in *Julius Cæsar* or in *Antony and Cleopatra* dressed in doublet and hose would not look rather out of place. He answered he 'had never thought of that.' In fact, difficulties almost

innumerable must crop up if we attempt to represent plays without appropriate costume and scenery, the aim of which is to realize the locale of the action."

Prominent Dramatists.

Equally brilliant during this period were the literary annals of Drury Lane. Chief among its writers was John Dryden; for, with very few exceptions, all the dramatic work of "Glorious John" were first produced upon this stage. And with all their faults—the stilted rant of the heroic rhymed tragedies and the licentiousness of the comedies—they contain so much of his finest work that those who are unacquainted with his plays can have but a limited appreciation of his poetical genius. Among others were Sir Charles Sedley, Congreve and Wycherly, with their best works, Colley Cibber and Vanbrugh, the two last being comparatively free from the grossness of the times. Nor should we forget the four dramas of Richard Steele, nor the *Busy Body* and *The Wonder* of Mrs. Centlivre, the latter an admirable comedy of intrigue.

Between the two houses there was an array of dramatic genius which can only have been overshadowed by the Titans of the Shakespearean age. But the licentiousness of the drama proved fatal to it, writers, with brutal cynicism, denying all virtue both to man and woman, and not infrequently lapsing into the vilest obscenity. Jeremy Collier's work did much to correct this evil, and Steele and Cibber introduced a purer school of comedy; but the lachrymose sentimen-

talism of the former did much to defeat his good intentions.

A Theatrical Triumvirate.

Soon after the knavish lawyer had been deprived of his patent, William Collier, a member of Parliament, obtained a license to open Drury Lane during the queen's pleasure. As Rich refused to give up possession, he was compelled to force an entrance; but only to find that the former had removed everything in the shape of dresses and properties. Collier's speculation was far from successful, and soon he was glad to transfer his interest to three of the prominent actors of the day—Cibber, Doggett and Wilks. Thus was formed the management of the so-called triumvirate, one of the most prosperous in the old annals of the London stage.

From a histrionic point of view these three actors were a host in themselves; Cibber, who was never happy out of the society of a lord, who was a member of White's Club, the only actor that ever obtained that privilege, was an incomparable fop and fine gentleman. Wilks, though he had few natural gifts for the stage, yet, by study and application, had become the finest light comedian of his day. Few actors have had the privilege of creating so many famous characters, and his Prince Hal was pronounced to be a performance of the highest excellence. Doggett was admirable in his own peculiar line, and was a consummate artist in dressing and make-up. He chiefly shone in old men's parts and characters in low life. He had a passion for

speculating on the Stock Exchange, and was so enthusiastic a Whig that, in his will, he left a sum of money for a coat and badge to be annually rowed for by Thames watermen on the 1st of August, to celebrate the accession of the house of Hanover. Three individuals of more opposite tastes were never linked together; Doggett, the miserly money-grubber; Cibber, the fashionable rake, who squandered his money at the gambling-table, while Wilks was entirely absorbed in his profession and was lavish in expenditure only upon stage dresses. Nevertheless, the union prospered to an extraordinary degree, for when the common interests of the partners were in question they always agreed.

"In the twenty years we were our own directors," writes Cibber, "we never had a creditor that had occasion to come twice for his bill; every Monday morning discharged us of all demands before we took a shilling for our own use. And from this time we neither asked any actor, nor were desired by them, to sign any agreement whatever. The rate of their respective salaries was only entered in our daily payroll, which plain record every one looked upon as good as city security."

Barton Booth.

Doggett's Whig fanaticism, however, presently brought about a change in the government. The rising tragedian of the day, the man who, by consensus of opinion, was hailed as the successor of Betterton, was Barton Booth, and when Addison's *Cato* was produced,

in 1715, he created such an impression in the part of the Roman censor that Lord Bolingbroke suggested he should be admitted to a share of the patent, and as Booth was a pet with the aristocracy, a carriage and six almost nightly waiting at the stage door to convey him to some noble house, the suggestion was little short of a command.

Ann Oldfield.

Doggett was so indignant at being controlled by a Tory lord that he withdrew in high dudgeon, ultimately receiving £600 for his interest in the patent, the exact sum which Booth paid for his admission. Booth was a gentleman by birth, and a scholar, and these advantages were apparent in his acting; but he had not the versatility of either of his great predecessors, Hart or Betterton. He was successful only in heavy tragedy, and was an especially fine Othello and a grand Lear.

Foremost among the ladies under the triumvirate management was the famous Ann Oldfield, who was advanced from the position of barmaid at the Mitre tavern, in St. James's market, kept by her aunt, to be the associate of duchesses; she was the original Lady Betty Modish of Cibber's *Careless Husband*, and the old actor writes of her in the most enthusiastic terms: "I have often seen her in private societies, where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of her behavior without the least diminution of their sense of dignity." As to her tragic powers, Chetwood says, in his *History of the Stage*: "Her piercing, flaming eyes,

with manner and action suiting, used to make me shrink with awe." She was the original Jane Shore in Rowe's tragedy of that name, first acted in 1714. The mantle of Mrs. Barry, however, was said to have fallen upon the shoulders of Mrs. Porter; for, as Doctor Johnson told Mrs. Siddons, in the vehemence of tragic rage he had never seen her equalled; she was the original Alicia in *Jane Shore* and Leonora in Young's *Revenge*; but her greatest parts were Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*, and Queen Elizabeth in Bankes' *Unhappy Favorite*.

During twenty years Drury Lane enjoyed an almost uninterrupted prosperity, though the share netted by each manager, £1,500, would appear somewhat insignificant in these days. At the death of Queen Anne, in 1714, through the influence of Sir Richard Steele, the license of Drury Lane had been changed into a patent for his lifetime and that of two of his heirs. When, however, in 1719, Sir Richard quarrelled with his patron, the duke of Newcastle, then Lord Chamberlain, the patent was suspended and the theatre closed. Much was said about "the insolence of the actors," and Colley Cibber was included in Steele's disgrace. It was only by submission that the triumvirate were able to obtain a temporary license to renew their performances, and it was not until Sir Robert Walpole returned to office, in 1721, that the patent rights were restored. Though his office was little more than a sinecure, and the managers were constantly complaining that he did little or nothing to earn the money, Steele was paid £700 a year as director, as

well as in consideration of the patent, which was made out in his name.

Charles Macklin's Shylock.

After the death or retirement of the triumvirate, dark days fell upon Drury Lane, relieved only by the appearance of the Irish actor, Charles Macklin, in the character of Shylock. For forty years or more Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* had been banished from the stage, a spurious version by Lord Lansdowne, entitled *The Jew of Venice*, taking its place, with Shylock degraded to a low comedy part. Macklin, who had already been discharged from Lincoln's Inn fields for flying in the face of tradition, proposed to restore the original text, and to play Shylock as a tragic character. The manager and actors of Drury Lane were aghast at such a proposal, but finally consented, as a desperate expedient, since business was hopelessly dull. The first performance was in January, 1741, and the town was taken by storm. Says a German critic who saw him play the part: "Picture to yourself a somewhat portly man, with a yellowish, coarse face, a nose by no means deficient in length, breadth or thickness, and a mouth, in the cutting of which nature's knife seems to have slipped almost as far as the ear. His dress is black and long, and his three-cornered hat is red. The words he speaks on coming on the stage are slow and full of import, the 'three thousand ducats' being mouthed with such unction that he seems to be tasting the ducats or what can be purchased with them.

In the scene when, for the first time, he misses his daughter, he appears without his hat, with his hair standing on end, and in some places a finger's length above the crown, as if the wind had blown it up. Both hands are firmly clenched, and all his movements are abrupt and convulsive." But ill-favored and awkward as Macklin was, he had histrionic powers of such high order that he was preferred to Garrick until the latter had appeared in *Richard III*. So intense was the malignity of his action and expression in the court scene that a shudder passed through the audience, which had before been accustomed to roar with laughter at this episode. Even George II, who had the utmost contempt for "blays and boetry," was aghast at the performance, and Pope immortalized the actor in the well-known couplet:

This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew.

Macklin gave the first blow to the old school of acting, and aroused a desire for something new, fresh and original, though he had not the tact and genius to carry out the revolution he had started. With all his unquestionable talents, so great as to atone for many physical defects, Macklin was sorely lacking in the business faculty, as much needed in stage management as in any other occupation. It was reserved for David Garrick to develop his ideas and give them practical effect.

Macklin wrote the famous comedy-drama, *The Man of the World*, himself playing the part of Sir Pertinax MacSychophant, a powerful study of an energetic

Scotchman. He played Shylock when over ninety years of age.

David Garrick.

David Garrick, the foremost actor of his age, and one of the most successful of English theatrical managers, was descended from a French Protestant family of Bordeaux, which had settled in England on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. His father, Captain Peter Garrick, was on a recruiting expedition when his celebrated son was born at Hereford, on February 19, 1716. The captain usually resided at Lichfield on half-pay, but, in order to benefit his large family, he accepted an offer to proceed on service to Gibraltar. This kept him many years absent from home, and the letters written to him by "little Davy," acquainting him with the doings at Lichfield, are highly interesting memorials of the future Roscius. In his nineteenth year, after receiving a good education at the grammar school at Lichfield, David was sent to the establishment at Edial, opened in June or July, 1736, by Doctor Samuel Johnson, his senior by seven years. The academy was closed in a few months, whereupon master and pupil left Lichfield for London, the one to commence the study of the law, and the other to try his tragedy of *Irene*—Johnson, as he afterward said, "with twopence halfpenny in his pocket," and Garrick "with three-halfpence in his."

Captain Garrick, who had returned from Gibraltar, died about a month after his son's arrival in London, the latter meanwhile being entered at Lincoln's Inn. Soon afterward a rich uncle, a wine merchant at Lisbon,

left David in his will a sum of £1,000, with which he and his brother entered into partnership as wine merchants in London and Lichfield. The concern was not prosperous—though Foote's assertion that he had known Garrick with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine merchant, need not be taken literally—and before long he had spent nearly half of his £1,000.

From Harlequin to Richard III.

At the age of twenty-five we find David Garrick without any definite occupation, haunting the theatres and coffee-houses and every place where actors resorted, chafing at the restraint which his friends put upon his inclination for the stage. One night, when he was behind the scenes at Goodman's Fields, Yates, who was playing harlequin, was taken suddenly ill, and young Garrick, who just before had made a hit in an amateur performance produced by Cave, the printer, was easily prevailed upon to take his place. Harlequin was not a mere acrobat in those days; his was a speaking part, chiefly impromptu wit, and Garrick seems to have acquitted himself well on the occasion; for soon afterward he accompanied Giffard's company to Ipswich, where he played under the name of Lydgate. Determined now to be an actor, Garrick, on his return to London, tried both the patent houses, and, finding they would have none of him, made his début at the unlicensed theatre in Goodman's Fields, October 9, 1741, as *Richard III.*

As usual, the entertainment was called "a concert of

vocal and instrumental music" in two parts, admission to which was by tickets at one, two and three shillings, to be obtained at the Fleece tavern, near the theatre. And between the two parts of the concert was presented, gratis, "an historical play called *The Life and Death of King Richard the Third*, etc., etc., the part of King Richard by a young gentleman who never appeared on any stage." This, however, was merely a play-bill statement.

Garriek now became well known as a young man about town with very original ideas upon acting, and many of his friends journeyed from "the west end" to witness his performance. From the first his success was assured. Accustomed as play-goers were to the cold and stiff declamation of the time, without heart, soul or impulse, the effect of his fire and passion upon the audience was electrical; the marvellous tent-scene in *Richard III*, the tiger-like ferocity of the last act, and the awful agony of the death-struggle were such as had never been witnessed in living memory. The press declared his reception to have been the greatest and most extraordinary ever known on such an occasion. After a few nights all fashionable London was rushing to see the new actor. Pope, who had sat at Betterton's feet, declared "That young man never had a rival and never will have a rival."

Old Style and New.

Considering his small experience, no actor ever made such a successful début. No doubt, by waiting and

exercising his powers of observation, and by studying many parts in private, Garrick had to a certain extent matured his powers. But making allowance for all his great natural gifts, there is no denying that, in one leap, he gained a position which, in the case of most other actors, has only been reached through years of toil. He seems to have charmed all classes; the learned and the ignorant, the cultured and the vulgar, great statesmen, poets, and even the fribbles of fashion were all but unanimous in his praise. The dissentient voices were so few that they were drowned in the clamor of applause. Quin might snarl and growl, and Horace Walpole, who seems to have grown alarmed at so much of the incense of praise finding its way to the nostrils of another, might give vent to a few feeble sneers, such as when he said, "I do not mention the things written in his praise because he writes most of them himself." But the battle was won. Nature and originality, in the place of the old conventional school, had triumphed on the stage once more.

Nevertheless, Garrick's easy but forcible style of acting at first threw the critics into some hesitation concerning the propriety as well as novelty of his manner. "They had," says Davies in his *Life of Garrick*, "been long accustomed to an elevation of the voice, with a sudden mechanical depression of its tones, calculated to excite admiration and to entrap applause; to the just modulation of the words, and concurring expression of the features from the genuine workings of nature they had been strangers, at least for some time. Quin, after he had seen Garrick in some important character,

declared peremptorily that if the young fellow was right, he and the rest of the players had been wrong." But Quin, it should be remembered, belonged to the classic school of acting.

"It is difficult to ascertain," remarked Geneste, "when the custom of speaking with a musical cadence first prevailed; like other corruptions, it probably crept in by degrees." Aaron Hill, in his dedication to *The Fatal Vision*, in 1716, reprobates the affected, vicious and unnatural tone of voice so common on the stage at that time. Antony Aston, in speaking of Mrs. Barry, says: "Neither she, nor any of the actresses of those times, had any tone in their speech." This sing-song delivery was undoubtedly borrowed from the Parisian stage, where it was the mode during the time of Louis XV. Against these vices of style Garrick used the most potent of all weapons, ridicule. When playing Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, he would check the actors who spoke unnaturally, and proceed to teach them how to deliver the speeches in true theatrical manner. For this purpose he selected some of the most eminent performers, and assumed the manner and deportment of each in his turn. He would begin with Delane, who, next to Quin, was the leading tragedian of the time. Retiring to the back of the stage, placing his left arm across his heart, resting his right elbow upon it, and raising a finger to his nose, he would come forward with a stately gait, nodding his head as he advanced, and deliver a speech in the exact tones of this declamatory tragedian. After that he would proceed to imitate other prominent performers of the day; but he never mim-

icked Quin, whom he considered an excellent actor in parts that suited him.

Garrick's Range of Characters.

In the meantime Garrick had been running the whole gamut of stage characters; among many others he had played burlesque as Bayes, he had appeared as jeune premier in the parts of Chamont and Lothario, as the old man, Fondlewife, in *The Old Bachelor*, as Hamlet, and as a low comedian in *The Lying Valet*. His career was one long triumph chequered, indeed, by disagreements, quarrels and heart-burnings—for Garrick was extremely sensitive—caused for the most part by the envy and jealousy which invariably dog the heels of success. He was lampooned as "The Sick Monkey" on his return to the stage, after having taken a much-needed rest; but he was ever ready with a reply to his assailants. Thus, when Doctor Hill attacked his pronunciation, saying that he pronounced his i's as if they were u's, Garrick answered:

If 'tis true, as you say, that I've injured a letter,
I'll change my note soon, and I hope for the better.
May the just right of letters, as well as of men,
Hereafter be fixed by the tongue and the pen.
Most devoutly I wish that they both have their due,
And that I may be never mistaken for U.

Garrick has often been compared with Betterton, as the only one who had thus far approached him in histrionic genius. But it must be remembered that he was more exposed to the attacks of envy from the very

universality of his success. Never, perhaps, was there a man in any profession who combined so many various qualities. A fair poet, a most fluent correspondent, an admirable conversationalist, possessing a person of singular grace, a voice of marvellous expressiveness and a disposition so mercurial and vivacious as is rarely found in an Englishman—due, probably, to his French descent—he was destined to be a great social as well as a great artistic success. He loved the society of men of birth and fashion; he seems to have had a more passionate desire to please in private even than in public, and almost to have justified the often-quoted couplet in Goldsmith's *Retaliation*:

On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.

Garrick's Liberality.

Some men, envious of the substantial fortune which he realized by almost incessant hard work, by a careful use of money, and by a strict, but never a paltry, economy, might call him mean; though many of them knew well, from their own experience, that his nature was truly generous—his purse, as well as his heart, ever open to a friend, however little he might deserve it. Yet they sneered because he was never guilty of reckless extravagance, and called him a miser. On the contrary, he was one of the most liberal of men, and a volume would not suffice to relate all the acts of generosity that this so-called "niggardly actor" performed in his lifetime. A single instance must suffice. When White-

field was building his Tabernacle in Tottenham Court road, he employed one of the carpenters who worked for Garrick at Drury Lane. Subscriptions do not seem to have come as fast as they were required to pay the workmen, so that the carpenter was compelled to ask Garrick for an advance. When pressed for his reason, he confessed that he had not received any wages from Whitefield. Garrick at once made the advance, and soon afterward quietly called on Whitefield, and, with many apologies for the liberty he was taking, offered him a five hundred pound banknote as his subscription toward the tabernacle. Considering that Garrick had no particular sympathy with Nonconformists, this action speaks as much for his charity as a Christian as it does for his liberality as a man.

Comparison with other Actors.

Perhaps Richard III remained Garrick's best Shakespearean character. He played Cibber's version, and not Shakespeare's. In fact, many of the Shakespearean parts were not played from the poet's own text; for Garrick probably doubted whether even his popularity would have reconciled his audiences to the unadulterated poetry of the great dramatist. Next to Richard, Lear would seem to have been his best performance. In Hamlet and Othello he did not equal Betterton, and in the latter he was infinitely surpassed by Edmund Kean. In fact, Othello was not one of his great parts. But in the wide range of characters which he undertook, Garrick was probably never equalled. A poor actor,

named Everard, who was first brought out as a boy by Garrick, says: "Such or such an actor in their respective fortes have been allowed to play such or such a part equally as well as him; but could they perform Archer and Scrub like him? and Abel Drugger, Ranger, and Bayes, and Benedick; speak his own prologue to Barbarossa, in the character of a country boy, and in a few minutes transform himself in the same play to Selin? Nay, in the same night he has played Sir John Brute and the Guardian, Romeo and Lord Chalkstone, Hamlet and Sharp, King Lear and Fribble, King Richard and the Schoolboy! Could any one but himself attempt such a wonderful variety, such an amazing contrast of character, and be equally great in all?" The compliment was by no means undeserved.

Garrick was, without doubt, a very intense actor; he threw himself most thoroughly into any part that he was playing; the naturalness of his acting was its principal charm, and as Churchill said, in his *Rosciad*, "he who is pleased with Nature must be pleased with thee." Certainly we know that he was not wanting in reverence for Shakespeare; in spite of the liberties which he ventured to take with the poet's text, he loved and worshipped him. To Powell, who threatened to be at one time a formidable rival, his advice was: "Never let your Shakespeare be out of your hands; keep him about you as a charm; the more you read him, the more you will like him, and the better you will act." As to his yielding to the popular taste for pantomime and spectacle, he may plead a justification in the words which his friend, Johnson, put into his mouth in the prologue

written for the inauguration of his management at Drury Lane:

The Drama's laws the Drama's patrons give,
And we, who live to please, must please to live.

We must remember, also, how much he did for the stage. Though his alterations of Shakespeare have given cause of offense, they are nothing to the outrages committed by others, who deformed the poet beyond recognition. Garrick made Shakespeare's plays once more popular. He purged the actors, for a time at least, of faults that were fatal to any high class of drama; he purified the stage of its grossness, and above all, he gradually got rid of those abominable nuisances, the people who crowded into the wings and on the stage itself, while the performance was going on, hampering the efforts of the performers.

Garrick as Manager.

The business of the theatre was divided between the partners, Garrick entirely superintending the stage. Order, decency and decorum were now strictly enforced; punctuality was insisted upon at rehearsals, at which as much attention was paid to the business of the scene as though the audience were already present; it was also insisted that actors should be perfect in their parts, and those who did not conform to these rules were suspended. He had gathered about him a noble company, including Macklin, Spranger Barry, who at

Covent Garden had achieved a success hardly inferior to his own; Mrs. Pritchard, a grand tragedienne; Mrs. Cibber, most tender and exquisite of Juliets and Ophelias; delightful Peg Woffington, most inimitable of high-comedy actresses, and a tragic actress as well, and Kitty Clive, unapproachable in the broader comedy. Garrick had the faculty of creating excellent performers out of very poor materials. As Miss Clive told him, "he could do what is infinitely more difficult than making bricks without straw; for he made actors and actresses without genius."

Without entering into any detailed account of Garrick's management, a few only of its more remarkable events will here be mentioned.

Revival of *Macbeth*.

On the 19th of March, 1748, *Macbeth*, freed from most of Davenant's alterations, though still a long way from the text, was revived. The music, supposed to be by Locke, which had been foisted into Davenant's version, was retained; the singing witches were dressed in the most charming costumes, some of white satin and lace, and were rouged and powdered, and made to look as attractive as possible. Garrick wore a scarlet coat, silk stockings and a powdered wig, and Mrs. Pritchard, as Lady Macbeth, was attired as a fashionable lady of the period. But their acting was marvellous, especially in the murder scene. Garrick's dagger soliloquy filled the audience with terror. "When," says Murphy, in his *Life of Garrick*, "he reëntered with the bloody dag-

gers in his hand, he was absolutely scared out of his senses; his distraction of mind and agonizing horrors were finely contrasted with Mrs. Pritchard's seeming tranquillity and confidence. Their looks and actions supplied the place of words, and their terrifying whispers made the scene awful and tremendous."

Pantomime.

In 1750 both Barry and Mrs. Cibber went over to Covent Garden, which had now by far the stronger company. This was the season of the famous *Romeo and Juliet* rivalry, which will be referred to later. Garrick had now to fight against the opposition house by producing pantomime, to which he had intended never to resort. In a prologue, on the opening night, he told the audience that, if they would not come to see *Lear* and *Hamlet*, he must give them *Harlequin*. And he did it so well that Rich trembled upon his throne. But Garrick never disgraced the stage by any unworthy production; some of the tragedies and comedies were terribly dull; but they never compromised the dignity of the stage. In a piece called *The Chinese Festival*, brought out in 1755, however, the pit and gallery took such offense at the introduction of foreign dancers that, although the performance was by the king's command, and his majesty was present, a riot ensued, great damage was done to the theatre, and Garrick's private residence narrowly escaped being sacked.

Although Garrick had set his face against allowing the audience upon the stage, the nuisance still con-

tinued on benefit nights, and as it brought a large sum of money to the beneficiaries, it was difficult to abolish it. It was this consideration that in 1762 induced him to enlarge Drury Lane so as to increase the capacity of the auditorium. By the enlargement the house was capable of holding £335, and now it was deemed a magnificent temple of the drama, puny as it would appear to modern playgoers.

Foreign Tour.

A year later the musical pieces at Covent Garden, such as the *Beggar's Opera* and *Love in a Village*, proved so attractive that the nightly takings at Drury Lane fell to £30, and sometimes even to £5 a night. It was at this time that Garrick took his continental trip, and created as great a furore among the French and Italians as he had among his own countrymen. A magnificent reception was accorded to the great actor when he reappeared on Drury Lane stage on September 14th, 1765, as Benedick. The king honored the performance by his presence, the house was filled to overflowing, and his entrance was hailed by a succession of ringing cheers. All the enthusiasm of nearly a quarter of a century back was reawakened among the public; night after night the theatre was crowded, and from that time until his retirement Garrick never played to a poor house. A curious experiment was made at the end of 1772, when he altered *Hamlet* by cutting out the plot in which Laertes seconds the king for the destruction of the prince, and excising Osric and the

grave-diggers. This mutilated version of the play kept the stage until 1780.

First Appearances of Sarah Siddons.

On the 29th of December, 1775, *The Merchant of Venice* was performed at Drury Lane; King was the Shylock, and Portia was played "by a young lady, being her first appearance." The young lady was a country actress named Siddons, whom Garrick had brought up from Cheltenham on the report of King and "fighting Parson Bates," the editor of *The Morning Post*. It was not her first appearance, as she had sustained the silent part of Venus in the revival of the Shakespearean jubilee procession, which had been transferred to the Drury Lane stage after the exhibition at Stratford-on-Avon in 1763, and was afterward frequently revived. Mrs. Siddons as Portia proved a terrible fiasco; her voice was weak, her movements were awkward, her dress was old, faded and in bad taste. After appearing in one or two other characters, with a similar result, she played Lady Anne to Garrick's Richard. Nervousness seems to have utterly overpowered her, and the critics pronounced the young actress "lamentable." Full of bitterness and disappointment, she went back to the country to gain confidence and mature her latent powers.

Early in 1776 Garrick announced his retirement from the stage, and a series of farewell performances of his great characters brought people from the remotest parts of the kingdom and even from the conti-

nent to Drury Lane. It was on the 10th of June, 1776, that, in the character of Don Felix in *The Wonder*, the curtain fell for the last time upon the great actor.

Garrick in Private Life.

In his private life Garrick was most happy. He was fortunate enough to find for his wife a simple-minded, loyal woman in a quarter which some people would deem very unpromising. Mrs. Garrick was a celebrated danseuse, known as Mademoiselle Violette, whose real name was Eva Maria Weigel, a Viennese. A more affectionate couple were never seen; they were not blessed with children, but they lived together in the most uninterrupted happiness, and their house was the scene of many social gatherings of a delightful kind. Mrs. Garrick survived her celebrated husband, and lived to the ripe age of ninety-eight, retaining to the very last much of that grace and charm of expression which had won the actor's heart.

Time will not allow us to dwell on the many points of interest in Garrick's career, all of which are to be found in Fitzgerald's *Life of Garrick*, and in those of Tom Davies and Arthur Murphy. On returning to London after a visit to the Spensers at Althorp in January, 1779, he was struck by a fatal attack of his old malady, the gout, and died at the age of sixty-three.

He was buried in Westminster Abbey with ceremonies as imposing as ever graced the funeral of a great man. The pall-bearers were headed by the duke of Devonshire and Earl Spencer, while round the grave

there were gathered such men as Burke and Fox, and his old friend and tutor, Samuel Johnson, his rugged countenance streaming with tears, his noble heart filled with the sincerest grief. The doctor's words so often quoted, artificial though they may seem, came from the heart when speaking of his dear Davy's death; he said that it "had eclipsed the gayety of nations."

As a literary man he was very happy in his epigrams and brief occasional poems. He had also excellent taste in poetry, being one of the first to make public recognition of the beauty of Gray's odes, then ridiculed or neglected. He was the author or adapter of plays which together fill four volumes, among them *The Lying Valet*, *Lethe*, *The Irish Widow* and *The Clandestine Marriage*, which last he wrote in conjunction with Colman. It is reproduced at the close of this volume. The popular farce, *High Life Below Stairs*, wrongly attributed to him, was from the pen of a clergyman named Townley.

Drury Lane Pay-roll.

In a weekly pay-list of Drury Lane theatre, dated February 13th, 1773, is a list of the salaries paid to each of its one hundred and eighty employés, the total amounting to £522 7s. 6d. Garrick and Lacy received each £16 13s., the former also drawing £17 10s. in his capacity as manager. To Barry and his wife was paid £50, and the next highest salary was £8, which was paid to four actors, two receiving £6 and one £2 10s. Of the women, Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Pope each received £8 and Miss Young £7. Three singers received

from £8 to £6 6s., and four dancers, among whom was Grimaldi, £6 to £5. Besides many minor performers, there were payments for men dressers, women dressers, properties, music and band, amounting to £49; soldiers, £4 4s.; house barber, £1 4s.; candlewoman 12s., and a pensioner, named Waldgrave, 10s. 6d. These expenses are considerably higher than in 1765, when £70 a night was distributed among one hundred and sixty persons, many of them actors or actresses of great celebrity. While the purchasing power of money was more than double its present rate, these salaries compare very feebly with those which now prevail, Sir Henry Irving, for instance, receiving more per night than the average annual stipend of a clergyman or college professor, while a second-class variety or vaudeville actor would deem as an insult the offer of a salary that would more than content the latter.

Sheridan's Management.

Sheridan's management succeeded to that of Garrick at Drury Lane, Lacy's share being afterward sold to Sheridan, as we have seen, for £45,000, though, as Charles Matthews the elder says, he never received his money, and was reduced to poverty by the purchaser's breach of faith. As Sheridan never paid anyone, it is not likely that he would have made an exception in the case of Garrick and Lacy, and it is probable that the only money that changed hands for this property, valued at nearly £100,000, was the £25,000 paid for the shares of Linley—Sheridan's father-in-law—and Dr. Ford. The production of *The School for Scandal* made the





first season very successful, and for two or three years thereafter Henderson was the chief attraction.

Success of Mrs. Siddons.

On October 10th, 1782, Mrs. Siddons made her second appearance, as the heroine of Southerne's *Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage*. And with what a difference! Her beautiful face and form, the exquisite tones of her voice, her deep tenderness, seized upon every heart, and her overwhelming agony thrilled every soul as it had never been thrilled before. Men wept, women fell into hysterics, transports of applause shook the house, the excitement and enthusiasm were almost terrible in their intensity, and the curtain fell amidst such acclamations as perhaps even Garrick had never roused. Her first salary was but £5 a week, which, of course, was quickly increased; but notwithstanding the crush, with houses crowded to the ceiling nightly, at the end of the season she was in receipt of only £20. Her benefit, however, realized a considerable sum.

It was not until her second season that she played her greatest part, Lady Macbeth. In this she had memories of Mrs. Pritchard to struggle against, and old play-goers considered her inferior to Garrick's great actress. So nervous was Sheridan in regard to such comparisons that he begged her, on the first night, even at the last moment, to cut out, in the sleep-walking scene, the business of washing her hands in pantomime, which had never been done before, Mrs. Pritchard holding the lamp throughout the scene. But she was

firm against his entreaties, and was justified by the result.

John Kemble and Mrs. Jordan.

It was on September 30th, 1783, that John Philip Kemble made his first appearance at Drury Lane in the character of Hamlet; he aroused considerable attention but no enthusiasm. Two years later the inimitable Dora Jordan came up from Yorkshire and opened here as Peggy in *The Country Girl*, driving her audience frantic with delight.

In 1791 Sir Christopher Wren's theatre had fallen into such decay that it was found necessary to pull it down. On June 4th the grand old house which had witnessed the triumphs of Hart, Betterton, Booth, Garrick, of Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Siddons, and scores of other peerless actors and actresses, closed its doors forever, and next day was handed over to pickaxe and shovel.

III.

Side-lights on the Drama of the Period.

This view of the eighteenth century drama would be incomplete if its minor, but interesting and often picturesque, features were ignored. The period was one of development on every side. A throng of aspirants for dramatic and histrionic fame was clamoring at the theatre door. There were then fewer avenues for the display of talents than in the succeeding century, and the stage offered the greatest rewards to genius. All could not be tragedians or comedians of the first rank. Nor is the gift for giving pleasure to theatre-goers confined to interpreters of the higher drama. There needs no argument to prove that, in this, as in all arts, diversity of talent is essential to complete enjoyment. And in considering the strong hold the theatre had gained upon the people at large, a hold that was ever growing in force and influence, it is proper to take cognizance of new, or revived, methods of acting, and of whatever passing eccentricities of play-making and interpretation proved worthy of going into the chronicles of the time, not a few of them having survived until our own day. While the English play-

goer was not averse to tragedy, he preferred the lighter branches, and especially pantomime and burlesque.

The Old English Pantomime.

The old English pantomime was modeled with certain modifications upon the masque of the Elizabethan and the Stuart days, which by its gorgeous scenery and mechanical effects anticipated the spectacular displays of a later date. The story was usually founded upon a classical subject, was illustrated with music and grand scenic effects, and to this was later added a comic transformation after the Italian style. Harlequin was turned into a magician, who, by a touch of his bat, could transform a palace into a hut, men and women into wheelbarrows and chairs, and colonnades into beds of tulips or serpents, and all these mechanical tricks were worked as deftly nearly two centuries ago as they are to-day. Harlequin was the hero, for the clown was simply a rustic servant of Pantaloon's, and played a very unimportant part in the piece until the genius of Grimaldi developed him into a new dramatic creation. It may also be mentioned that the tight, spangled dress was not worn by harlequin until the present century. From the days of *The Necromancer* pantomimes continued to be the best trump card a manager could play at either of the patent houses. John Rich succeeded his father as owner of the old theatre in Lincoln's Inn in 1714. He had a taste for acting, and at first essayed tragedy; but, being a man entirely devoid of education, he made a dismal failure. Yet there was a strong dramatic

genius in this coarse, illiterate man, though he was not under the inspiration of the tragic muse, and it burst forth when, in 1717, he appeared as Harlequin in a pantomime called *Harlequin Executed*. Borrowed from the Italian Arlecchino, harlequin had hitherto been a speaking part; it was Rich, or Lun as he chose to call himself in the bills, who, simply from his inability to speak upon the stage, originated the silent harlequin, and by mere dumb action could rival the power and pathos of the most accomplished tragedian.

Early in 1723 the managers of Drury Lane, in rivalry with Rich, produced a pantomime by one Thurmond, a dancing-master, entitled *Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, which, constructed on a much more elaborate scale than those hitherto given at Lincoln's Inn Fields, may be considered as the first English pantomime. Not to be outdone, in December of the same year, Rich brought out his famous *Necromancer, or Harlequin Executed*, which far surpassed in splendor all that had yet been seen. The prologue to this piece is very suggestive as to the relative positions of the two houses:

Yon rival theatre, by success made great,
Plotting destruction to our sinking State,
Turn'd our own arms upon us—and woe be to us—
They needs must raise the devil to undo us;
Straight our enchanter gave his spirit wing,
And conjur'd all the town within this ring.

A continuous rivalry was now carried on between the two theatres, and pantomime became the great attraction at both; for while at Drury Lane Booth, Wilks,

Cibber and Mrs. Oldfield could draw but £500 a week to the treasury, the genius of nonsense would swell the receipts to £1,000. The price in the boxes was raised from four to five shillings at pantomime time; but the following curious notice was placed upon the bill of the play: "The advance money to be returned to those who choose to go out before the overture of the entertainment." As late as 1747 we find a similar notice in Garrick's bills. When Garrick became one of the managers of Drury Lane he promised the audience, as will be remembered, that he would not attempt to gain their patronage by such spurious attractions as pantomimes, making an appeal to the public to support him in this laudable resolve:

'Tis yours this night to bid the reign commence
Of rescu'd nature and reviving sense;
To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
For useful mirth and salutary woe;
Bid scenic virtue form the rising age,
And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

Nevertheless, he was very soon compelled to rescind his promise and follow in the footsteps of his predecessor.

Jackson, in his *History of the Scottish Stage*, gives his impression of Rich as a mime, which is worth quoting: "I saw him enact the hatching of Harlequin by the heat of the sun. This certainly was a masterpiece in dumb show; from the first chipping of the egg, his receiving of motion, his feeling of the ground, his standing up-

right, to his quick Harlequin trip round the empty shell, through the whole progression, every limb had its tongue and every motion a voice, which spoke with most miraculous organ to the understanding and sensation of the observers." If we may believe Jackson and other authorities on the stage, it is doubtful whether, except in decoration and other equipment, modern pantomime shows any improvement over that which delighted the playgoers of two centuries ago.

A Curious Custom Resented

In 1721 a most serious riot occurred at the Lincoln's Inn theatre, through the long-established practice of allowing certain privileged persons to occupy seats on the stage during the performance. One night, in a principal scene of *Macbeth*, a nobleman crossed from one side of the stage to the other, in front of the actors, to speak to a friend, and when Rich remonstrated with him, my lord struck him in the face; Rich and Quin drew their swords, the rest of the company supported them, and the beaux took the offender's side. But the players proving too strong, their foes were driven out of the theatre. Reinforced, the rioters soon returned, smashed the handsome mirrors that lined the proscenium, threw torches among the scenery, tore up the seats, and it was not until the military were called out that the disturbance was quelled. From that time the fashion, which had been introduced by Charles II, of posting a guard on each side the stage, was revived and partly survived almost to the present day, in the soldiers

that attended the performances at Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres.

The Beggars' Opera.

It was at Lincoln's Inn, in 1727, that Gay's *Beggars' Opera* took the town by storm, and Lavinia Fenton turned the heads of the beaux as Polly Peachem, won a ducal lover and ultimately the coronet of a duchess. Dean Swift first suggested the idea. The songs and music matched the political satire of the piece in their hold upon the public. It ran for sixty-two nights, and originated the light musical comedy which is still in favor.

Old Covent Garden.

Six thousand pounds were rapidly subscribed for the new or, as it is now termed, the old Covent Garden theatre, the site of which was on the grounds of a convent, and the building was at once commenced. Its progress seems to have excited considerable interest among "the quality," and the precincts became a kind of fashionable resort, a number of people assembling every day to watch the masons at work. Rich paid the duke of Bedford £100 a year as ground-rent; but this, at the manager's death, was raised to £300, and in 1792 to £940. The house was gorgeously decorated by the Italian artist, Amiconi; the scenery was by the same artist, assisted by George Lambert, the founder of the Beef-steak club. It was but a small theatre; from the stage to the back of the boxes the length was only fifty-one

feet, and it would hold when full not more than £200, although space was economized to such an extent that only twenty-one inches were allowed to each person. The prices of admission were: boxes, 5s.; pit, 3s. 6d.; galleries, 2s. and 1s., and seats on the stage, 10s. 6d. There were two entrances, one under the piazza and the other in Bow street. The opening piece was Congreve's *Way of the World*, followed a few nights later by *The Beggars' Opera* with the original cast, which ran for twenty nights.

Peg Woffington.

For ten years nothing of particular note is to be found in the records of the house, or indeed of the other theatres. A dead level of conventional dullness and mediocrity reigned throughout the theatrical world, and no first appearance of any interest took place at Covent Garden until that of saucy Peg Woffington, who, though only twenty-two, was already an idol in Dublin. After many rebuffs she forced her way into the presence of John Rich and his seven-and-twenty cats, his companions in the theatre, prevailed upon the eccentric manager to engage her, and opened on November 8th, 1740, as Sylvia in the *Recruiting Officer*. A few nights later she played Sir Harry Wildair in the *Constant Couple*, and electrified the town by a performance such as had not been seen before, repeating the character twenty times during the season to crowded houses. No woman before, or since, ever made so delightful a stage rake, so elegant, so fascinating, so debonair that even ladies

fell in love with her. In the following season she went over to Drury Lane, but it was at Covent Garden, in 1757, while playing Rosalind, that she was death-stricken, and the curtain fell forever upon this brilliant and erring woman.

In 1744 the famous George Anne Bellamy made her first appearance upon these boards as Monimia in *The Orphan*. She was such a mere child at the time that Quin objected to play with her, but so admirably did she acquit herself, that at the end of the performance he caught her in his arms and exclaimed, "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee." In after years she rivalled both Mrs. Cibber and Woffington, though for this she was more indebted to her beauty and brilliant conversational gifts than to her histrionic powers. She was Garrick's Juliet during the famous run of Shakespeare's tragedy at Drury Lane.

Garrick and Quin.

When the new theatre first opened Quin was in the height of his popularity; haughty, absolute, overbearing, every actor, and even John Rich himself, trembled before him. In 1746 Garrick accepted an engagement to play with Quin, and in Quin's stronghold. It was in Rowe's *Fair Penitent* the battle of the schools was fought: the elder actor was Horatio, Garrick "the gallant, gay Lothario." It was a marvellous contrast, the monotonous cadences, the dreary pauses, the sawing of the air, the dignified indifference to the sentiments he was uttering, which marked Quin's style, and the

passion, the impulse, the deep intensity of "little David." Although the old school had still its adherents, the public verdict was not long in doubt.

In the same year, when Garrick had gone back to Drury Lane as manager, a far more formidable rival, "silver-tongued" Spranger Barry, was dividing the suffrages of the town with him as Romeo; play-goers were astonished at the piece running twelve nights at Drury Lane and thirteen at Covent Garden, and wits composed epigrams upon the event. Barry's fine person, handsome face and musical voice gave him a great advantage over Garrick, and, in addition, he had Mrs. Cibber, the most pathetic of actresses, for his Juliet. But when the two played Lear against one another, Garrick's supremacy asserted itself. Wonderful stories, however, are told of Barry's Othello, of ladies shrieking with terror at his delivery of the line, "I'll tear her all to pieces;" of actors who were so vividly impressed that they could not sleep after witnessing it.

Rich died in 1761, and the theatre was bought by Colman the Elder and his friends, in 1767, for £60,000.

Macbeth and Othello in Court Dress.

Garrick, as we have seen, played Hamlet in eighteenth century costume. In 1773, the same year that Goldsmith produced *She Stoops to Conquer*, Lewis, the most mercurial of comedians, made his first appearance in London; and Macklin, at the age of eighty-four, performed Macbeth for the first time on the metropolitan stage, and had the cour-

age to substitute Highland tartans for Garrick's gold-laced scarlet coat—a custom which survived until Charles Kean's famous revival of the tragedy at the Princess' theatre. It was said at the time that he looked more like an old Scotch piper than a prince of the blood royal, and that his performance was very uneven; so, while some applauded, others hissed. This opposition, he asserted, proceeded from his brother actors; law proceedings and affidavits followed, and the next time he appeared as Macbeth he was met with howls of disapprobation; more than that, the audience insisted on his discharge upon the spot, and would not listen to a word until an actor appeared on the stage with a board, upon which was written, "At the command of the public, Mr. Macklin is discharged." Next season his popularity was reëstablished. Reynolds, the dramatist, gives a sad picture of Spranger Barry in his premature decay at fifty, playing Othello in a full suit of gold-laced scarlet, a little cocked hat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings that conspicuously displayed a pair of gouty legs.

Macklin's Farewell.

A very remarkable farewell was witnessed at Covent Garden on May 7th, 1789, when Macklin, at the age of ninety-nine, took leave of the stage in his great part of Shylock, which he had re-created fifty-seven years before at Drury Lane, before Bolingbroke, Swift, Steele and Pope. Memory had long been failing the wonderful old man, and his dazed look when he entered the green-room, and his strange questions, prepared every-

one for a breakdown. He delivered the first two or three speeches correctly, but evidently without any understanding; then he stopped, tried to go on again, but all was blank, and coming forward to the footlights he begged the audience, in a broken voice, to pardon him and allow his substitute, who had been kept ready dressed at the wings, to finish the performance. He lived to his hundred and eighth year, but never again set foot upon the stage.

Full justice has hardly been done to Macklin's remarkable powers; it was he who in 1741 initiated that sweeping reform in histrionic art which Garrick perfected, and it was he who, as we have just seen, made the first attempt at appropriate costume upon the English stage. His excellent comedies have been mentioned elsewhere.

In 1803 Covent Garden was burned to the ground, twenty-three firemen perishing in the ruins. The loss of property was estimated at £150,000, of which only £50,000 was covered by insurance. A drawing of the interior of Covent Garden, made about 1763, shows us the stage lit at the back by six chandeliers, each with twelve candles in brass sockets. Garrick abolished these at Drury Lane when he returned from the continent, substituting concealed lamps in their places and introducing footlights. Tate Wilkinson, in his *Wandering Patentee*, gives a vivid picture of the appearance of the theatre at this period. "On crowded nights an amphitheatre of seats was raised upon the stage, where there would be groups of ill-dressed lads and persons sitting on the stage in front three or four feet deep;

so that, in fact, a performer on a popular night could not step with safety, lest he should thereby hurt or offend, or be thrown down amidst scores of idle or tipsy apprentices. But it was the beaux who usually affected that part of the house. There was only one entrance on each side of the stage, which was always particularly crowded. First they sported their own figures to gratify self-consequence and impede and interfere with the performers who had to come on and go off the stage. They loved to affront the audience, particularly the gallery part, who would answer by showering down oranges and half-eaten apples, to the great terror of the ladies in the pit, who were so closely wedged they could not move." Picture the absurdity of Macbeth, fresh from the murder of Duncan, having to push his way through a throng of dandies or half-drunken apprentices. Riots so often arose from the causes above mentioned that several royal proclamations were issued forbidding spectators to be admitted on the stage, but the evil continued until Garrick finally suppressed it at Drury Lane.

With a stage half proscenium and lit by candles, there was not much scope for scenic effects; nevertheless, Garrick engaged the famous Dutch artist, Louthenberg; but it was only to paint for his pantomimes and spectacles, while the legitimate drama remained as dingy as ever. Stage upholstery, as it is now called, was, with the exceptions just mentioned, utterly neglected; no appeal was made to the eye; but good plays and bad plays were finely acted; the performers were all-sufficient, and no gorgeous setting was considered

necessary for the dramatic picture. Success was won, not by the scene-painter, but by the actor.

The Haymarket and Its Burlesques.

After Drury Lane there is not a theatre in London so rich in memories of famous actors and famous dramatists as "the little theatre in the Haymarket." It was built in 1720, was quite small, and only cost £1,500, including scenery and wardrobe. This was its Christmas advertisement: "At the New Theatre in the Haymarket, between Little Suffolk street and James street, which is now completely furnished, will be presented a French Comedy, as soon as the rest of the actors arrive from Paris, who are duly expected. Boxes and pit, five shillings; gallery, two-and-sixpence." About the close of the month the house was opened with *La Fille à la Mode, ou le Badaud de Paris*, "under the patronage of a distinguished nobleman," the company, according to the fashion of the day, styling themselves "the French Comedians of his Grace the Duke of Montague." At first performances were given four times a week, then two were found to be sufficient, and the prices of admission were lowered. This venture failed, and the stage was occupied by acrobats and rope dancers.

Colley Cibber does not deign to mention this house in his *Apology*, and it seems to have lived only upon sufferance. Occasionally a temporary license was obtained, through the influence of some nobleman, for regular dramatic performances; at others it was opened by amateurs, or by authors who could not obtain a hear-

ing for their bantlings at Lincoln's Inn or Drury Lane. An extraordinary production of this kind was brought out here in 1729 by one Johnson, a dancing-master of Chester. It was called *Hurlolhrumbo, or The Supernatural*. A contemporary describes the author as playing a part called Lord Flame, and "speaking sometimes in one key, sometimes in another; sometimes dancing, sometimes fiddling, sometimes walking upon stilts." This curious medley had a run of thirty nights.

Fielding's Burlesques.

Fielding's is the first great name connected with the Haymarket. It was here, in 1730, that he produced his once-famous burlesque, *The Tragedy of Tragedies, or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*. Like *The Rehearsal*, it was a satire upon the heavy tragedies of the day, and, though greatly altered to fall in with the humor of succeeding generations, it kept the stage until almost within living memory, Lord Grizzle being one of Liston's favorite parts. Swift is credited with saying that he never laughed but twice, and one of these occasions was at a performance of *Tom Thumb*. About eight out of the twenty-seven dramatic pieces which came from the facile pen of the author of *Tom Jones* were first produced upon the Haymarket stage. Most of them are in the burlesque style; indeed, Fielding was the father of modern burlesque, and one or two of his efforts in that line, founded upon classic subjects, with songs and duets that might almost have been written by Byron or Brough, could with very little

alteration have been revived at the old Strand theatre. His comedy was intensely personal; no public abuse and public character, from the prime minister to the actors at the neighboring theatre, escaped flagellation by that keen and daring wit.

The first English company of any note that performed at the Haymarket was styled the "Drury Lane rebels," under Theophilus Cibber. The patentees of the latter house appealed to the law, and one of the actors, Harper, was arrested to make a test case, under an old act of Elizabeth, which accounted all players wandering from place to place or playing in unlicensed buildings as rogues and vagabonds. Popular feeling, however, was all on the side of Harper, who was a householder and a man of means; he was acquitted of the charge, and the house remained open for several months.

Fielding as Manager.

Fielding, having found some "adventurers" to risk their money, undertook the management of the Haymarket in 1734; but he opened either on sufferance or in defiance of the law, as the following advertisement shows: "March 5, 1735, The Great Mogul's Company of English Comedians, newly imported at the New Theatre in the Haymarket. Sealed tickets for Monday, March 8, being the third day of the entertainment, may be had at the Two Blue Posts, Bow Street, Covent Garden, and at the Bedford Coffee House, in the Great Piazza." We find but few familiar names among this company; Macklin's is the only one of any repute, for

he had not returned to Drury Lane with the rest of the revolting company.

Fielding's management lasted until the passing of the Licensing act in 1737, which his bitter satire upon Sir Robert Walpole, under the name of Quidam in *The Historical Register*, did much to bring about. The act was extremely unpopular, and audiences loved to damn new plays because they were licensed. A fine opportunity for displaying their animus was afforded by the announcement that a French company was about to give a series of representations "under distinguished patronage" at "the little theatre." As it was publicly threatened that the performance would be violently interfered with, a detachment of soldiers was ordered to the Haymarket, and one of the Westminster magistrates, Justice Deveil, took a seat in the pit as the representative of law and order.

English vs. French Actors.

Nothing so exasperated John Bull in those days as to flourish the French flag before his eyes. As soon as possible after the doors were opened the house was crammed from floor to ceiling, and the audience sounded the note of preparation by singing in chorus "The Roast Beef of Old England." When the curtain rose, the actors were discovered standing between two files of Grenadier guards, the soldiers with fixed bayonets, and resting upon their firelocks. A roar of indignation greeted this sight; the whole pit rose, and, turning to the justice, demanded that the military should be with-

drawn. He dared not resist the appeal, and gave the men the signal to retire. But when the actors began to speak, their words were drowned by howls, hisses and cat-calls, while patriotic individuals demanded to know why English actors should be prohibited from appearing upon that stage and foreigners obtain permission and protection. Deveil promised that, if the performance were permitted to go on, he would lay the grievance before the king, but shouts of "No treaties!" was the unanimous answer. As they could not make their voices heard, the unfortunate French people ranged themselves for a dance; then from all parts of the house came a hailstorm of peas, covering the stage and rendering dancing impossible. The justice called for a candle to read the Riot act, and threatened to summon the military to disperse the audience. The French and Spanish ambassadors, with their wives, and other aristocratic patrons, now hurried from their boxes; while the management, finding it useless to oppose the storm, ordered the curtain to be dropped. "And," says a contemporary writer, "no battle gained by Marlborough ever elicited more frantic enthusiasm than did this victory over foreign actors."

Footc, and Dramatic Satire.

Sam Foote was well known as a young man about town, a coffee-house wit, and a pupil of Macklin, who actually once played Othello to his tutor's Iago. Being short, rotund and full of face, he failed in tragedy, but was soon a favorite in comedy. In Drury Lane he made

such a success as a mimic in the character of Bayes in *The Rehearsal* that, finding himself overshadowed by the genius of Garrick, he determined to turn manager on his own account. Failing to procure a license, he announced that a concert of music would on a certain day be performed at the theatre in the Haymarket, after which would be given gratis a new entertainment, called *The Diversions of the Morning*, and a farce taken from *The Old Bachelor*, entitled the *Credulous Husband*—Fondlewife, Mr. Foote—with an epilogue by the Bedford Coffee house. The *Diversions* and the epilogue consisted of a mimicry of the best-known men of the day—actors, doctors, lawyers and statesmen. Had he contented himself with this, he might not have been interfered with; but the managers of the patent houses could not tolerate such an infringement of their rights as a performance of one of the popular comedies of the time. They appealed to the Westminster magistrates, and on the second night the constables entered the theatre and dispersed the audience.

But Foote was not to be so easily put down. The very next morning he published the following announcement in the *General Advertiser*: “On Saturday afternoon, exactly at twelve o’clock, at the new theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote begs the favour of his friends to come and drink a dish of chocolate with him, and ’tis hoped there will be a great deal of company and some joyous spirits. He will endeavor to make the morning as diverting as possible. Tickets to be had for this entertainment at George’s Coffee House, Temple Bar, without which no one will be admitted.

N. B.—Sir Dilbury Diddle will be there, and Lady Betty Frisk has absolutely promised." No one knew what this advertisement meant, and a crowded house was the natural result. When the curtain rose, Foote came forward and informed the audience that, "as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, while chocolate was getting ready, proceed with his instructions before them." Then some young people, engaged for the purpose, were brought upon the stage, and, under pretense of instructing them in the art of acting, he introduced his imitations. By Foote and others similar devices, that need not here be mentioned, were frequently adopted to evade the law, which, in truth, was not very strictly administered.

The authorities did not again interfere with him, so he altered the time of his entertainment from morning to evening, and the title to "Tea;" and to drink a dish of tea with Mr. Foote, as going to his theatre came to be styled, was the rage of the season. Next year he called his performance "An Auction of Pictures." Here is one of his advertisements: "At the forty-ninth day's sale at his auction-room in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote will exhibit a choice collection of pictures—some entirely new lots, consisting of a poet, a beau, a Frenchman, a miser, a taylor, a sot, two young gentlemen, and a ghost; two of which are originals, the rest copies from the best masters." In this he mimicked the peculiarities of Justice Deveil, Cock, the auctioneer, and orator Henley. To the attractions of his "Auction" he presently added a "Cat Concert," in ridicule of the Italian

opera, and fashion, as usual, flocked to the Haymarket to hear and see its tastes turned into ridicule.

The Great Bottle Conjurer.

In 1749 the little theatre nearly came to an untimely end through a hoax perpetrated for a wager by the duke of Montagu. One morning the town was thrown into a wonderful state of excitement by the announcement that, on a certain evening, the "Great Bottle Conjurer" would appear at the Haymarket; that, among other extraordinary feats, he would put himself into a quart bottle and sing a song therein; that he would summon up the spirits of dead relations for anyone desirous of seeing them, and enable the living to converse with the dead. There is no limit to English gullibility, and the house was crammed, not with the ignorant and vulgar, but with the fashionable world. After a long delay, during which the dupes grew very impatient, a person came forward and informed the audience that the bottle conjurer was unable to appear that evening, but if they would come again the next, he would undertake to squeeze himself into a pint bottle instead of a quart. The spectators resented the joke; the duke of Cumberland, who was among them, drew his sword, and, leaping upon the stage, called upon everybody to follow him. The people, ripe for mischief, were not slow to accept the prince's invitation. The seats were smashed; the scenery was torn down, and the wreckage carried into the street, where a bonfire was made of it; but for the timely appearance

of the authorities the building itself would have been added to the fuel.

Foote's Mimicry.

During the winter months Foote was engaged at one or other of the winter theatres, where many of his best pieces were produced, to be transferred in the summer to the Haymarket. His satire was not keener than Fielding's, but the great novelist's characters were performed by only ordinary actors, while Foote, who was one of the most extraordinary mimics that ever lived, embodied his own caricatures, and thereby increased their poignancy tenfold. His audacity was astounding. In the *Orators* he had personated, under the name of Peter Paragraph, a noted printer, publisher and alderman of Dublin, known as one-legged George Faulkener. The Irishman brought an action of libel against him, and a trial ensued. Next season at the Haymarket the incorrigible wit introduced a new scene into the piece, representing the trial, in which he caricatured judge, counsel and jury. In the *Mayor of Garratt*, one of his wittiest pieces, he held up to public derision, under the name of Matthew Mug, the silly old duke of Newcastle, of whom he used to say that he always appeared as if he had lost an hour in the morning and was looking for it all day.

One of his most famous caricatures was Mr. Cadwalader in *The Author*. The original of this character was an intimate friend of his, a Welsh gentleman named Ap-Rice, an enormously corpulent person, with a broad, staring face, an incoherent way of speaking,

a loud voice, an awkward gait, and a trick of rolling his head from side to side. Here was a splendid subject for Foote, and he produced him to the life, to the huge delight of the audience, among which more than once was to be found Ap-Rice himself, who, in happy ignorance that he was gazing upon his own reflection, laughed as loudly and applauded as vigorously as the rest. But it was impossible that he could long remain in this blissful ignorance, for so unmistakable was the imitation to everybody but the victim, that he could not enter a coffee-room, or be seen in any public place, without people whispering "There's Cadwallader!" or some one calling after him, "This is my Becky, my dear Becky," one of the phrases of the play. When the Welshman at length realized the fact he was furious, and obtained an injunction from the lord chamberlain to restrain the performance. In *A Trip to Calais*, under the name of Lady Kitty Crocodile, he threatened to hold up to public censure the notorious duchess of Kingston. The piece was never played; but in another version, called *The Capuchin*, he gibbeted an infamous scoundrel named Jackson, a hedge parson, one of the duchess' creatures.

In 1766 Foote had obtained a patent for his theatre at the cost of a limb. While on a visit at Lord Mexborough's during the hunting season, the duke of York, for a frolic, mounted him upon a blooded horse. The animal threw him, and his leg, being fractured in two places, had to be amputated. Considering that he ought to make the victim of his ill-timed jest some amends, the duke interceded with the king and obtained

a patent, by which Foote was legally permitted to keep open the Haymarket between May 14th and September 14th. Thus, after a vagabond existence of forty-six years, "the little theatre" was at last raised to the dignity of a lawful dramatic temple. Thereupon the manager made extensive alterations and improvements in the house, which had hitherto been little better than a barn. In 1777 he sold his interest to George Colman, recently one of the patentees of Covent Garden, for an annuity of £1,600 a year. He lived only a few months afterward.

The Two Colmans, Dramatists and Managers.

Foote's patent died with him, and it was under an annual license that his successor opened the house. With the accession of the elder Colman to the management of the Haymarket began the golden era of "the little theatre," which for the next forty years and more continued in full meridian splendor. Three notable first appearances inaugurated Colman's opening season. First, the charming Miss Farren, afterward countess of Derby, a finished actress of the fine ladies of comedy, but little above mediocrity in serious parts. Second, Edwin, Weston's successor, and his equal in humor though not in art, for he was grievously addicted to "gagging." As with Weston, his sottishness was a disease. A contemporary says: "I have seen him brought to the stage-door in the bottom of a chaise, senseless and motionless; if the clothes could be put upon him, and he was pushed on to the lamps, he rubbed his stupid

eyes for a minute; consciousness and brilliant humor awakened together, and his acting seemed only the richer for the bestial indulgence that had overwhelmed him." Henderson, who was supposed to be Garrick's successor, was the third and most important of the three, his Shylock, Hamlet and Falstaff drawing to Colman's treasury between £4,000 and £5,000 within a month. It was Henderson who, by his fine recitation, brought Cowper's "Johnny Gilpin" into popularity. He afterward went to Drury Lane, but in 1785 death cut short his career, which promised great things. It now became the custom for the best performers of the two great winter theatres to appear at the Haymarket during the summer months, and actors and actresses who had successfully passed through a provincial probation here made their first trial for the highest honors of their profession.

In 1789 failing health of body and mind obliged the elder Colman to relinquish the management to his son. All his best work had been done for the great houses, and his pen added nothing of permanent value to the repertory of the Haymarket. He died in 1794. The reign of George Colman the younger commenced with a terrible calamity. On February 3d their Majesties commanded a play at this theatre. An enormous crowd awaited the opening of the doors, and the rush was so great that fifteen persons were trampled to death, and many others greatly injured. The house was closed in consequence; but people soon forget such catastrophes, and when the summer came the theatre was as crowded as ever. The younger Colman almost monopolized the

Haymarket with his own productions, and gathered around him an excellent staff. In the year 1800 the company included John Emery, Charles Kemble, Fawcett, Jack Bannister, Suett—Dick Suett immortalized by Charles Lamb—Farley, Barrymore, Irish Johnstone, Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Gibbs and others. Elliston, one of the finest representatives of high comedy that England has produced, made his *début* here in 1796, and Charles Mathews the elder in 1802. Liston's first appearance was in 1805.

The Tailors' Riot.

At this house there occurred, in 1805, one of the most curious riots in theatrical annals. In 1767 Foote had produced a burlesque, the author of which has never been discovered, entitled *The Tailors: A Tragedy for Warm Weather*. Dowton announced the revival of this piece for his benefit. As the title implies, it was a satire upon the sartorial craft; and upon the bills being issued, an indignation meeting was convened among the knights of the needle, who vowed to oppose the performance by might and main. Menacing letters were sent to Dowton, telling him that seventeen thousand tailors would attend to hiss the piece, and one who signed himself "DEATH" added that ten thousand more could be found if necessary. These threats were laughed at by the actors; but when night came, it was discovered that the craft were in earnest, and that, with few exceptions, they had contrived to secure every seat in the house, while a mob without still squeezed for

admission. The moment Dowton appeared upon the stage, there arose a hideous uproar, and someone threw a pair of shears at him. Not a word would the rioters listen to, nor would they accept any compromise in the way of changing the piece. Within howled and hissed without intermission hundreds of exasperated tailors; outside howled and bellowed thousands of raging members of the craft, who attempted to storm the house. So formidable did the riot become that a magistrate had to be sent for and special constables called out; but these were helpless against the overwhelming odds; so that a troop of Life Guards was summoned, who made sixteen prisoners and put the rest to flight.

Before entering further into the dramatic annals of the nineteenth century, it may be well to pass in review, even at the risk of some slight repetition, the period covered in the present volume. While the eighteenth century contains much that will perish with English literature and the English drama, it cannot, of course, be compared with the cycle in which Shakespeare lived, the age in which Lily and Marlowe prepared the way for the great master by giving form and shape to the English theatre, an age that produced, moreover, such worthy successors as Ben Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, and a host of others whose works the dramatic world will never willingly let die. If, with one or two exceptions, the plays of the latter are no longer seen on the stage, and many of them are seldom even read, except as literary curiosities, they have served, none the less, as a basis for the drama of succeeding ages, up to the age in which we live.

Of the serious branch of the drama, during the eighteenth century, little need here be said; for, as an able critic has remarked, "With Addison's *Cato* English tragedy committed suicide, though its pale ghost survived." Some few pieces there were of unquestionable merit, as Hughes' *Siege of Damascus*, and Fenton's *Mariamne*; but it may be stated in general terms that tragedy had hopelessly stiffened into forms molded, and too often clumsily modeled on the French. If any marked exception can be made, it is in the works of Edward Young, though it is rather on his *Night Thoughts* and other poems that his real fame rests. Yet his tragedies possess sufficient vigor and variety to distinguish them from the dead level of imitation shown by his contemporaries—an imitation of an imitation, of Corneille, Racine and other French masters, who themselves copied or adapted their drama from that of Æschylus and Sophocles. Yet the tragedies of Young are essentially gloomy in character, and none the less so that they were chiefly written in the mid hours of the day, with closed shutters, by the light of a candle fixed in a human skull. For the most part the "Augustan age of English literature," the age that gave birth to Johnson and Goldsmith, to Dryden and Pope, Fielding and Sheridan, was content with a feeble reflex of the Greek, one that they deemed the classic drama. It is worthy of note that the best remembered tragedy of the eighteenth century, Home's *Douglas*, was the production of an author whose famous kinsman, David Hume, advised him "to read Shakespeare, but to get Racine and Voltaire by heart."

But while English tragedy was enlivened by no high creative genius, writers of comedy were spurred to effort by the most formidable rival with which the legitimate drama was ever called on to contend. This was the opera, the advent of which on the English stage has already been briefly mentioned, but whose point of contact with the history of dramatic literature cannot be passed over in a word. The origin of opera in England dates back to the latter half of the seventeenth century, when Henry Purcell attempted to set English music to the words of English poets, but with very indifferent success. Nor were the efforts of Addison and others more successful to recover the operatic stage for the native tongue. Italian texts, which before had met with little favor, began to assert themselves, not piecemeal, as at first, but in their entirety, and the genius of Handel completed the triumphs of a form of art which no longer had any connection with the national drama, and which reached the height of its popularity about the time when Garrick was achieving his earliest triumphs on the stage.



THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE

BY

GEORGE COLMAN
THE ELDER

AND

DAVID GARRICK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD OGLEBY.
SIR JOHN MELVIL.
STERLING.
LOVEWELL.
CANTON.
BRUSH.
SERGEANT FLOWER.
TRAVERSE.
TRUEMAN.
JOHN.
MRS. HEIDELBERG.
MISS STERLING.
FANNY.
BETTY.
TRUSTY.

PRELUDE.

This famous comedy has, with good reason, been classed with *The School for Scandal* and the few of that fine old quality. Colman drew the general plot, and asked Garrick's help, which was given, the last act being mainly his work. It was produced at Drury Lane in 1766, with Farren as Lord Ogleby.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A room in Sterling's house. Miss Fanny and Betty meeting.

Enter Betty.

Betty.—Ma'am! Miss Fanny! Ma'am!

Fanny.—What's the matter, Betty?

Betty.—Oh, la! ma'am! as sure as I'm alive, here is your husband—

Fanny.—Hush! my dear Betty; if anybody in the house should hear you, I am ruined.

Betty.—Mercy on me! it has frightened me to such a degree, that my heart is come up to my mouth. But as I was a-saying, ma'am, here's that dear, sweet—

Fanny.—Have a care, Betty.

Betty.—Lord! I am bewitched, I think. But as I was a-saying, ma'am, here's Mr. Lovewell just come from London.

Fanny.—Indeed!

Betty.—Yes, indeed, and indeed, ma'am, he is! I saw him crossing the courtyard in his boots.

Fanny.—I am glad to hear it. But pray, now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again, on any account. You know we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of an accident.

Betty.—Dear ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave—and if it's never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doomsday for Betty.

Fanny.—I know you are faithful—but in our circumstances we cannot be too careful.

Betty.—Very true, ma'am! and yet I vow and protest there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body mayn't mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

Fanny.—Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then, I hope, you may mention it to anybody. Mr. Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

Betty.—The sooner the better, I believe; for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale I know of, will come and tell it for him.

Fanny.—(Blushing.) Fie, Betty!

Betty.—Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms—

Fanny.—Have done! I shall be quite angry with you.

Betty.—Angry! Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it as much as if it was my own. I meant no harm, heaven knows.

Fanny.—Well, say no more of this—it makes me uneasy. All I have to ask of you is to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter till we disclose it to the family ourselves.

Betty.—Me reveal it! If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world. And as for Mr. Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother. But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always

sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evenings. For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as—

Fanny.—See there, now! again. Pray be careful.

Betty.—Well—well, nobody hears me. Man and wife—I'll say no more—what I tell you is very true, for all that.

Lovewell.—(Cailing, without.) William!

Betty.—Hark! I hear your husband—

Fanny.—What!

Betty.—I say, here comes Mr. Lovewell. Mind the caution I give you—I'll be whipped, now, if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family. However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me—as you sow, you must reap—as you brew, so you must bake. I'll e'en slip down the back stairs, and leave you together. (Exit.)

Fanny.—I see, I see I shall never have a moment's ease till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

Enter Lovewell.

Lovewell.—My love! How's this? In tears? Indeed, this is too much. You promised me to support your spirits, and to wait the determination of our fortune with patience. For my sake, for your own, be comforted! Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

Fanny.—Oh, Mr. Lovewell, the indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family, and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

Lov.—Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. The amiable delicacy of your temper, and your quick sensibility, only serve to make you unhappy. To clear up this affair properly to Mr. Sterling is the continual employment of my thoughts. Everything now is in a fair train. It begins to grow ripe for a dis-

covery, and I have no doubt of its concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

Fanny.—End how it will, I am resolved it shall end soon—very soon—I would not live another week in this agony of mind, to be mistress of the universe.

Lov.—Do not be too violent, neither. Do not let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion. I have brought letters from Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil to Mr. Sterling. They will be here this evening—and I dare say, within this hour.

Fanny.—I am sorry for it.

Lov.—Why so?

Fanny.—No matter. Only let us disclose our marriage immediately!

Lov.—As soon as possible.

Fanny.—But directly.

Lov.—In a few days, you may depend upon it.

Fanny.—To-night—or to-morrow morning.

Lov.—That, I fear, will be impracticable.

Fanny.—Nay, but you must.

Lov.—Must! Why?

Fanny.—Indeed you must. I have the most alarming reasons for it.

Lov.—Alarming indeed! for they alarm me even before I am acquainted with them. What are they?

Fanny.—I cannot tell you.

Lov.—Not tell me?

Fanny.—Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with everything.

Lov.—Sorry they are coming! Must be discovered! What can all this mean? Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

Fanny.—Do not disturb yourself with conjectures, but rest assured that, though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

Lov.—You put me upon the rack. I would do anything to make you easy. But you know your father's temper. Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence can ever make him forego—and these he thinks his money will purchase. You know, too, your aunt's (Mrs. Heidelberg's) notions of the splendor of high life, her contempt for everything that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that from the vast fortune in her hands, by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr. Sterling and the whole family: now, if they come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly, they might, perhaps, be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

Fanny.—But if they are made acquainted with it otherwise than by ourselves, it will be ten times worse: and a discovery grows every day more probable. The whole family have long suspected our affection. We are also in the power of a foolish maid-servant; and if we may even depend on her fidelity, we cannot answer for her discretion. Discover it, therefore, immediately, lest some accident should bring it to light and involve us in additional disgrace.

Lov.—Well, well—I mean to discover it soon, but would not do it precipitately. I have more than once sounded Mr. Sterling about it, and will attempt him more seriously the next opportunity. But my principal hopes are these: My relationship to Lord Ogleby, and his having placed me with your father, have been, you know, the first link in the chain of this connection between the two families; in consequence of which I am at present in high favor with all parties: while they all remain thus well-affected to me, I propose to lay our case before the old lord; and if I can prevail on him to mediate in this affair, I make no doubt but he will be able to appease your father; and, being a lord and a man of quality, I am sure he may bring Mrs. Heidelberg into good humor at any time. Let me beg you, therefore, to have but a little patience, as, you see, we are upon the very eve of a discovery that must probably be to our advantage.

Fanny.—Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

Lov.—But in the meantime make yourself easy.

Fanny.—As easy as I can, I will. We had better not remain together any longer at present. Think of this business, and let me know how you proceed.

Lov.—Depend on my care. But pray be cheerful.

Fanny.—I will. (Going, meets Mr. Sterling entering.)

Sterling.—Hey-day! who have we got here?

Fanny.—(Confused.) Mr. Lovewell, sir.

Ster.—And where are you going, hussy?

Fanny.—To my sister's chamber, sir. (Exit.)

Ster.—Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl yonder in the corner? Well, well—let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to Sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

Lov.—Would to heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation!

Ster.—Yourself? eh, Lovewell!

Lov.—With your pleasure, sir!

Ster.—Mighty well!

Lov.—And I flatter myself that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

Ster.—Better and better!

Lov.—And if I could but obtain your consent, sir——

Ster.—What! you marry Fanny!—no, no—that will never do, Lovewell! You are a good boy, to be sure; I have a great value for you—but can't think of you for a son-in-law. There's no stuff in the case, no money, Lovewell.

Lov.—My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but though not equal to splendor, sufficient to keep us above distress. Add to which, that I hope by diligence to increase it; and have love, honor——

Ster.—But not the stuff, Lovewell! Add one little round 0 to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me. You know I've a regard for you—would do anything to serve you—anything on the footing of friendship—but——

Lov.—If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be

assured that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly.

Ster.—Psha! psha! that's another thing, you know. Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

Lov.—But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations.

Ster.—Inclinations! why, you would not persuade me that the girl is in love with you—eh, Lovewell?

Lov.—I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir, but I am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

Ster.—Why, indeed now, if your kinsman, Lord Ogleby would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible. No, no—'twill never do—I must hear no more of this. Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

Lov.—(Hesitating.) I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you.

Ster.—Why, you would not offer to marry her without my consent! would you, Lovewell?

Lov.—(Confused.) Marry her, sir!

Ster.—Ay, marry her, sir! I know very well that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young spark as you are, would go much farther toward persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers and mothers, or uncles and aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner. I must insist on it that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

Lov.—Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir—— Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

Ster.—Promise, then, that you will carry this matter farther without my approbation.

Lov.—You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no farther.

Ster.—Well, well—that's enough—I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you. Come, come, let's have done with this nonsense. What's doing in town? Any news upon 'Change?

Lov.—Nothing material.

Ster.—And how are stocks?

Lov.—Fell one and a half this morning.

Ster.—Well, well—some good news from America, and they'll be up again. But how are Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

Lov.—Very soon, sir. I came on purpose to give you their commands. Here are letters from both of them.

(Giving letters.)

Ster.—Let me see—let me see. 'Slife, how his lordship's letter is perfumed! It takes my breath away. (Opening it.) And French paper, too! with a fine border of flowers and flourishes—and a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes. "My dear Mr. Sterling." (Reading.) Mercy on me! His lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercises. But how's this? Eh! "with you to-night!" (Reading.) "Lawyers to-morrow morning"—that's sudden, indeed. Where's my sister Heidelberg? she should know of this immediately. Here, John! Harry! Thomas! (Calling the servants.) Hark ye, Lovewell!

Lov.—Sir!

Ster.—Mind, now, how I'll entertain his lordship and Sir John. We'll show your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city. They shall eat gold—and drink gold—and lie in gold—here cook! butler! (Calling.) What signifies your birth and education and titles? Money, money, that's the stuff that makes the great man in this country.

Lov.—Very true, sir!

Ster.—True, sir! Why, then have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business. Where are these fellows? John! Thomas! (Calling.) Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course. Ah! Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe. 'Slife, man, a rich English merchant

may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob. Where are all my rascals? Here, William! (Exit, calling.)

Lov.—(Alone.) So—as I suspected—quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure. What's best to be done? Let me see! Suppose I get Sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to Lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it. Poor Fanny! It hurts me to see her so uneasy, and her making a mystery of the cause adds to my anxiety. Something must be done on her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed.

(Exit.)

SCENE II

Another Apartment.

Miss Sterling and Miss Fanny sitting.

Miss Sterling.—(Both rise.) Oh, my dear sister, say no more! This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure. Well, after all, it is extremely natural—it is impossible to be angry with you.

Fanny.—Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

Miss Ster.—And you really pretend not to envy me?

Fanny.—Not in the least.

Miss Ster.—And you don't in the least wish that you were just in my situation?

Fanny.—No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

Miss Ster.—Why should you? What! on the brink of marriage, fortune, title—but I had forgot. There's that dear, sweet creature Mr. Lovewell, in the case. You would not break your faith with your true love now for the world, I warrant you.

Fanny.—Mr. Lovewell! always Mr. Lovewell! Lord, what signifies Mr. Lovewell, sister?

Miss Ster.—Pretty, peevish soul! Oh, my dear, grave, romantic sister! a perfect philosopher in petticoats! Love and a cottage! Eh, Fanny? Ah, give me indifference and a coach and six!

Fanny.—And why not the coach and six without the indifference? But pray, when is this happy marriage of yours to be celebrated? I long to give you joy.

Miss Ster.—In a day or two—I can't tell exactly. Oh, my dear sister! (Aside.) I must mortify her a little. I know you have a pretty taste. Pray give me your opinion of my jewels. (Goes back to the table and returns with jewels.) How do you like the style of this esclavage?

(Showing the jewels.)

Fanny.—Extremely handsome, indeed, and well fancied.

Miss Ster.—What d'ye think of these bracelets? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds, to one, and Sir John's to the other. And this pair of earrings! set transparent! here, the tops, you see, will take off to wear in a morning or in an undress—how do you like them?

(Holding them up.)

Fanny.—Very much, I assure you. Bless me, sister, you have a prodigious quantity of jewels—you'll be the very queen of diamonds.

Miss Ster.—Ha! ha! ha! very well, my dear! I shall be as fine as a little queen, indeed. I have a bouquet to come home to-morrow—made up of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts—jewels of all colors, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixed—the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life. The jeweller says I shall set out with as many diamonds as anybody in town except Lady Brilliant and Polly—what d'ye call it? Lord Squander's kept mistress.

Fanny.—But what are your wedding-clothes, sister?

Miss Ster.—Oh, white and silver, to be sure, you know—I bought them at Sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlor behind the shop, consulting Lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

Fanny.—Fie, sister! how could you be so abominably provoking?

Miss Ster.—Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knight's ladies. Did you ever observe the airs of Lady Lutestring dressed in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's Hall—while the

civil, smirking Sir Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face as close as a new-cut yew-hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter like a bad shilling?

Fanny.—Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much. If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a byword in the city. You must never venture on the inside of Temple Bar again.

Miss Ster.—Never do I desire it—never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor Square—far, far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick and Farrington Without and Within! My heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at court! gilt chariot! piebald horses—laced liveries! and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—"Who is that young lady? who is she?" "Lady Melvil, ma'am." Lady Melvil! My ears tingle at the sound. And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking, "Any news upon 'Change?" to cry, "Well, Sir John, anything new from Arthur's?" or to say to some other woman of quality, "Was your ladyship at the Duchess of Rubber's last night? Did you call in at Lady Thunder's? In the immensity of the crowd I swear I did not see you—scarce a soul at the opera last Saturday—shall I see you at St. James's next Thursday?" Oh, the dear Beau Monde! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

Fanny.—And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me—no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

Miss Ster.—(Affectedly.) You? You're above pity—you would not change conditions with me. You're over head and ears in love, you know. Nay, for that matter, if Mr. Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very comfortably, I dare say. He will mind his business—you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family—and once in a season, perhaps, you'll sit together in a front box at the benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing master's, you know—and perhaps I may meet you in the summer with some other citizens at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations. You sha'n't want my countenance, I assure you.

Fanny.—Oh, you are too kind, sister!

Enter Mrs. Heidelberg.

Mrs. Heidelberg.—Here this evening— I vow and pertest, we shall scarce have time to provide for them. (To Miss Sterling.) Oh, my dear! I am glad to see you're not quite in a dish-abille. Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

Miss Ster.—To-night, ma'am?

Mrs. Hei.—Yes, my dear, to-night. Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles! Lord, I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lute-string. Where is this dawdle of a housekeeper?

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Oh, here, Trusty! do you know that people of quality are expected here this evening?

Trusty.—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—Well, do you be sure, now, that everything is done in the most genteelest manner—and to the honor of the family.

Trusty.—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—Well—but mind what I say to you.

Trusty.—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber; d'ye hear? and Sir John in the blue damask room. His lordship's valet-de-shamb in the opposite—

Trusty.—But Mr. Lovewell is come down; and you know that's his room, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—Well, well; Mr. Lovewell may make shift, or get a bed at the George. But hark ye, Trusty!

Trusty.—Ma'am!

Mrs. Hei.—Get the great dining-room in order as soon as possible. Unpaper the curtains, take the kivers off the couch and the chairs, and put the china figures on the mantelpiece immediately, and set their heads a-nodding.

Trusty.—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—Begone, then! Fly this instant. Where's my brother Sterling?

Trusty.—Talking to the butler, ma'am.

(Fanny rises and advances.)

Mrs. Hei.—Very well. (Exit Trusty.) Miss Fanny! I per-test I did not see you before. Lord, child, what's the matter with you?

Fanny.—With me? Nothing, ma'am!

Mrs. Hei.—Bless me! Why, your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colors, I per-test. And then you have dressed yourself as loose, and as big—I declare there is not such a thing to be seen, now, as a young woman with a fine waist. You all make yourselves as round as Mrs. Deputy Bar-ter. Go, child! You know the qualaty will be here by and by. Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen. (Exit Fanny.) She is gone away in tears—absolutely crying, I vow and per-test. This ridicalous love! we must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect natural of the girl.

Miss Ster.—Poor soul! she can't help it.

Mrs. Hei.—Well, my dear, now I shall have an opportoonty of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning Sir John Melvil's behavior to you.

Miss Ster.—Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But indeed, ma'am, I cannot be persuaded but that Sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family! I have heard of flames and darts, but Sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

Mrs. Hei.—Oh, fie, my dear! I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of your poor sister. What you complain of as coldness and indifference is nothing but the extreme gentility of his address, an exact pictur of the man-ners of qualaty.

Miss Ster.—Oh, he is the very mirror of complaisance! full of formal bows and set speeches! I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him.

Mrs. Hei.—I say jealous, indeed! Jealous of who, pray?

Miss Ster.—My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favorite than I am, and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

Mrs. Hel.—Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, can't distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the family?—between you and your sister, for instance, or me and my brother? Be advised by me, child: it is all purliteness and good breeding. Nobody know the quality better than I do.

Miss Ster.—In my mind, the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than Sir John. He is full of attentions to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizen face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

Enter Sterling.

Sterling.—(Entering.) No fish? Why, the pond was dragged but yesterday morning. There's carp and trench in the boat. Pox on't, if that dog Lovewell had any thought, he would have brought down a turbot or some of the land-carriage mackerel.

Mrs. Hel.—Lord, brother, I am afraid his lordship and Sir John will not arrive while it is light.

Ster.—I warrant you. But pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be dressed to-morrow, and some venison—and let the gardener cut some pineapples—and get out some ice. I'll answer for wine, I warrant you. I'll give them such a glass of champagne as they never drank in their lives—no, not at a duke's table.

Mrs. Hel.—Pray, now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of quality. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff, and that will keep you awake; and don't burst out with your horrible loud horse-laughs. It is monstrous vulgar.

Ster.—Never fear, sister! Who have we here?

Mrs. Hel.—It is Mounseer Cantoan, the Swish gentleman that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest.

Enter Canton.

Ster.—Ah, mounseer! your servant; I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

Canton.—Mosh oblige to Monsieur Sterling. Ma'am, I am yours. Matemoiselle, I am yours. (Bowing round.)

Mrs. Hci.—Your humble servant, Mr. Cantoon!

Cant.—I kiss your hands, matam.

Ster.—Well, mounseer, and what news of your good family? When are we to see his lordship and Sir John?

Cant.—Monsieur Sterling! Milor Ogleby and Sir Jean Melvil will be here in one-quarter hour.

Ster.—I am glad to hear it.

Mrs. Hci.—Oh, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afeard of some accident. Will you please to have anything, Mr. Cantoon, after your journey?

Cant.—No, I tank you, ma'am.

Mrs. Hci.—Shall I go and show you the apartments, sir?

Cant.—You do me great honneur, ma'am.

Mrs. Hci.—Come, then. (To Miss Sterling.) Come, my dear. (Exeunt.)

Ster.—Fox on't, it's almost dark. It will be too late to go round the garden this evening. However, I will carry them to take a peep at my fine canal at least, I am determined. (Exit.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

An ante-chamber to Lord Ogleby's bed-chamber. Table with chocolate, and small case for medicines.

Enter Brush, my lord's valet-de-chambre, and Sterling's chambermaid.

Brush.—You shall stay, my dear; I insist upon it.

Chambermaid.—Nay, pray, sir, don't be so positive; I can't stay, indeed.

Brush.—You shall take one cup to our better acquaintance.

Chamb.—I seldom drinks chocolate; and if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one. If my lord should awake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or Madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frightened

to death: besides, I have had my tea already this morning—I'm sure I hear my lord. (Frightened.)

Brush.—No, no, madam, don't flutter yourself—the moment my lord wakes he rings his bell, which I answer sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

Chamb.—But should he come upon us without ringing?

Brush.—I'll forgive him if he does. This key (pointing to a row of phials) locks him up till I please to let him out.

Chamb.—Law, sir! that's potecary's stuff.

Brush.—It is so; but without this he can no more get out of bed than he can read without spectacles. (Sips.) What with qualms, age, rheumatisms and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing and winding up to set him a-going for the day.

Chamb.—(Sips.) That's prodigious indeed. (Sips.) My lord seems quite in a decay.

Brush.—Yes, he's quite a spectacle (sips), a mere corpse, till he is revived and refreshed from our little magazine here. When the restorative pills and cordial waters warm his stomach and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart, and then he sets up for the lover, the rake and the fine gentleman.

Chamb.—(Sips.) Poor gentleman! But should the Swish gentleman come upon us? (Frightened.)

Brush.—Why, then the English gentleman would be very angry. No foreigner must break in upon my privacy. (Sips.) But I can assure you Mr. Canton is otherwise employed. He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast. Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably. My lord's chocolate is remarkably good—he won't touch a drop but what comes from Italy.

Chamb.—(Sipping.) 'Tis very fine, indeed! (sips) and charmingly perfumed—it smells for all the world like our young ladies' dressing-boxes.

Brush.—You have an excellent taste, madam, and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking (rise and advance), and in return I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips. (Kissing her.) A small return of favors, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement

agreeable to both. (He bows, she courtesies; return and sit again.) Your young ladies are fine girls, faith (sips): though, upon my soul, I am quite of my old lord's opinion about them, and were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest. (Sips.)

Chamb.—Miss Fanny's the most affablest and the most best natur'd creter!

Brush.—And the eldest a little haughty or so—

Chamb.—More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself—but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. (Sips.)

Brush.—By no means; but you can't hurt it with us—we don't consider tempers—we want money, Mrs. Nancy; give us enough of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars.

Chamb.—Bless me, here's somebody! (Bell rings.) Oh! 'tis my lord. Well, your servant, Mr. Brush—I'll clean the cups in the next room.

Brush.—Do so—but never mind the bell—I shan't go this half hour. Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

Chamb.—Not for the world, Mr. Brush. I'll be here to set all things to rights—but I must not drink tea, indeed; and so, your servant. (Bell rings. Exit with tea-board.)

Brush.—It is impossible to stupefy one's self in the country for a week without some little flirting with the Abigails. This is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan for her. (Bell rings.) And now I'll go to my lord, for I have nothing else to do. (Going.)

Enter Canton, with newspapers in his hand.

Canton.—Monsieur Brush — Maître Brush — my lor' stirra yet?

Brush.—He has just rung his bell—I am going to him.

(Exit Brush.)

Cant.—Dépêchez-vous donc. (Puts on spectacles.) I wish de devil had all dese papiers—I forget as fast as I read. De Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Gazette de Cron-

ique, and so dey all go l'un après l'autre. I must get some nouvelle for my lor', or he'll be enragé contre moi. Voyons! (Reads the papers.) Here is nothing but Anti-Sejanus et advertise—

Enter Maid with chocolate things.

Vat you vant, child?

Chambermaid.—Only the chocolate things, sir.

Cant.—Oh, ver well—dat is good girl—and very prit, too.

(Exit Maid.)

Lord Ogleby.—(Within.) Canton, he, he. (Coughs.) Canton!

Cant.—I come, my lor'—vat shall I do? I have no news. He will make great tintamarre!

Lord Ogl.—(Within.) Canton, I say, Canton! Where are you?

Enter Lord Ogleby, leaning on Brush.

Cant.—Here, my lor'; I ask pardon, my lor'; I have not finish de paplers—

Lord Ogl.—Damn your pardon, and your paplers—I want you here, Canton.

Cant.—Den I run; dat is all. (Shuffles along.)

(Lord Ogleby leans upon Canton too, and comes forward.)

Lord Ogl.—You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture—you have the language and impertinence of the French, with the laziness of Dutchmen.

Cant.—'Tis very true, my lor'—I can't help—

Lord Ogl.—(Cries out.) Oh, Diavolo!

Cant.—You are not in pain, I hope, my lor'.

Lord Ogl.—Indeed but I am, my lor'. That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-colored ditch which he calls a canal; and what with the dew and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screwed to my body.

Cant.—A little véritable eau d'arquibusade vill set all to right again.

(My lord sits down in an easy chair, and Brush gives him chocolate.)

Lord Ogl.—Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

Brush.—Here, my lord. (Pouring out.)

Lord Ogl.—Quelle nouvelle avez-vous, Canton?

Cant.—A great deal of papier, but no news at all.

Lord Ogl.—What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow!

Cant.—Yes, my lor', I have a little advertise here vill give you more plaisir den all de lies about nothing at all. La voilà! (Puts on his spectacles.)

Lord Ogl.—Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis and discretion.

Cant.—I vill, my lor'. (Canton reads.) Dere is no question but that the *Cosmétique Royale* vill utterlie take away all heats, pimps, frecks, oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de wrinque of old age, etc., etc. A great deal more, my lor'—be sure to ask for de *Cosmétique Royale*, signed by de docteur own hand. Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good men vill tink. Eh bien, my lor'?

Lord Ogl.—Eh bien, Canton; will you purchase any?

Cant.—For you, my lor'?

Lord Ogl.—For me, you old puppy! for what?

Cant.—My lor'?

Lord Ogl.—Do I want cosmetics?

Cant.—My lor'?

Lord Ogl.—Look in my face. Come, be sincere. Does it want the assistance of art?

Cant.—(With his spectacles.) En vérité non. 'Tis very smoose and brillian—but tote dat you might take a little by way of prevention.

Lord Ogl.—You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do. The surfeit water, Brush! (Brush pours out.) What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with? Eh?

Brush.—Very well to marry in, my lord, but it would not do to live with.

Lord Ogl.—You are right, Brush. There is no washing the blackamoor white—Mr. Sterling will never get rid of Black-friars, always taste of the Borachio; and the poor woman, his

sister, is so busy and so notable to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation! I think the daughters are tolerable. Where's my cephalic snuff? (Brush gives him a box.)

Cant.—Dey tink so of you, my lor', for dey look at notting else, ma foi.

Lord Ogl.—Did they? Why, I think they did a little. Where's my glass? (Brush puts one on the table.) The youngest is delectable. (Takes snuff.)

Cant.—Oh, oui, my lor', very delect, inteed; she made doux yeux at you, my lor'.

Lord Ogl.—She was particular. The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spir-its of her father and aunt, happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother. Some peppermint water, Brush! How happy is it, *Cant.*, for young ladies in general, that people of quality overlook everything in a marriage contract but their fortune.

Cant.—C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

Lord Ogl.—Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bedside. (Brush goes for it.) *Canton*, do you wait in the ante-chamber, and let no one interrupt me till I call you.

Cant.—Mush good may do your lordship! (Exit.)

Lord Ogl.—(To Brush, who brings the pamphlet.) And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. (Exit Brush.) (Alone.) What can I possibly do among these women, here, with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. (Rises.) He! Courage, my lor'! by heavens, I'm another creature. (Hums and dances a little.) It will do, faith. Bravo, my lor'! These girls have absolutely inspired me. If they are in for a game of romps—me voilà prêt! (Sings and dances.) Oh! that's an ugly twinge—but it's gone. I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. (Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass and takes out rouge; while he is painting himself, a knocking at the door.) Who's there? I won't be disturbed.

Cant.—(Without.) My lor', my lor', here is Monsieur Sterling to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

Lord Ogl.—(Softly.) What a fellow! (Aloud.) I am extremely honored by Mr. Sterling. Why don't you see him in, monsieur? I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. (Door opens.) Oh, my dear Mr. Sterling, you do me a great deal of honor.

Enter Canton, Sterling and Lovewell.

Sterling.—I hope, my lord, that your lordship slept well in the night. I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have. I spare no pains to get 'em, nor money to buy them. His majesty, God bless him, don't sleep upon a better bed out of his palace; and if I had said in, too, I hope no treason, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Your beds are like everything else about you—incomparable. They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr. Sterling.

Ster.—What say you, then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? You must see my water by daylight, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flowering trees, and my bed of Dutch tulips. Matters looked but dim last night, my lord; I feel the dew in my great toe—but I would put on a cut shoe, that I might be able to walk you'about. I may be laid up to-morrow.

Lord Ogl.—(Aside.) I pray heaven you may!

Ster.—What say you, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast. Mr. Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world—he! he!

Canton.—Bravissimo, my lor'—ha! ha! ha!

Ster.—They shall meet your lordship in the garden—we don't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner, and in the evening you shall go to the Grand Tower, as I call it—ha! ha! ha!

Lord Ogl.—Not afoot, I hope, Mr. Sterling—consider your gout, my good friend. You'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness.

Cant.—Ha! ha! ha! 'Tis admirable! en vérité!

(Laughing very heartily.)

Ster.—If my young man (to Lovewell), here, would but laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at yours, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

Lord Ogl.—What say you, *Cant.*, will you take my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune—

Cant.—But when your lordship is out of spirits.

Lord Ogl.—Well said, *Cant.*; but here comes my nephew to play his part.

Enter Sir John Melvil.

Well, Sir John, what news from the island of Love? have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

Sir John.—I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

Lord Ogl.—I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir. What poor things, Mr. Sterling, these very young fellows are! they make love with faces as if they were burying the dead; though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living—eh, Mr. Sterling?

Ster.—Not if they have enough to live upon, my lord—ha! ha! ha!

Cant.—Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.

Sir John.—(Apart to Lovewell.) Prithee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden; I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly.

Lovewell.—We'll go together. If your lordship and Mr. Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.
(Exeunt Sir John and Lovewell.)

Ster.—My girls are always ready; I make 'em rise soon and to bed early; their husbands shall have 'em with good constitutions and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Fine things, Mr. Sterling!

Ster.—Fine things, indeed, my lord! Ah, my lord, had not you run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Very pleasant.

(Half laughing.)

Ster.—Here's mounseer, now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but having little to eat and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out—eating and drinking kills us all.

Lord Ogl.—Very pleasant, I protest. (Aside.) What a vulgar dog!

Cant.—My lor' so old as me? He is chicken to me, and look like a boy to pauvre me.

Ster.—Ha! ha! ha! Well said, mounseer—keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world. Ha! ha! ha! But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden; we have but a little time to breakfast. I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, my lord, and then for the hot rolls and butter! (Exit.)

Lord Ogl.—I shall attend you with pleasure. Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts of it. What a strange beast it is!

Cant.—C'est un barbare.

Lord Ogl.—He is a vulgar dog, and if there was not so much money in the family, which I can't do without, I would leave him and the hot rolls directly. Come along, monsieur!

(Exeunt Lord Ogleby and Canton.)

SCENE II.

A garden.

Enter Sir John Melvill and Lovewell.

Lovewell.—In my room this morning? Impossible.

Sir John.—Before five this morning, I promise you.

Lov.—On what occasion?

Sir John.—I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you that I could not sleep in my bed; but I found that you could not sleep neither—the bird was flown, and the nest long since cold. Where were you, Lovewell?

Lov.—Pooh! prithee! ridiculous!

Sir John.—Come, now, which was it? Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul, too—or—

Lov.—Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your business.

Sir John.—Well, but where were you, Lovewell?

Lov.—Walking—writing—what signifies where I was?

Sir John.—Walking! yes, I dare say. It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet, refreshing showers to walk in! No, no, Lovewell. Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids—

Lov.—But your business—your business, Sir John!

Sir John.—Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

Lov.—Psha!

Sir John.—(Aside.) Poor Lovewell! he can't bear it, I see. (Aloud.) She charged you not to kiss and tell—eh, Lovewell? However, though you will not honor me with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine. What do you think of Miss Sterling?

Lov.—What do I think of Miss Sterling?

Sir John.—Ay, what d'ye think of her?

Lov.—An odd question! But I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

Sir John.—All mischief and malice, I doubt not.

Lov.—How?

Sir John.—But her person—what d'ye think of that?

Lov.—Pretty and agreeable.

Sir John.—An awkward creature.

Lov.—What is the meaning of all this?

Sir John.—I'll tell you. You must know, Lovewell, that, notwithstanding all appearances— (Seeing Lord Ogleby, etc.) We are interrupted: when they are gone I'll explain.

Enter Lord Ogleby, Sterling, Mrs. Heidelberg, Miss Sterling and Fanny.

Lord Ogleby.—Great improvements, indeed, Mr. Sterling! wonderful improvements! The four seasons in lead, the Fly-

ing Mercury and the basin with Neptune in the middle, are all in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many rich figures as the man at Hyde Park Corner.

Sterling.—The chief pleasure of a country house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expense, not I. This is quite another guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun—smack-smooth—as you see. Then I made a green-house out of the old laundry, and turned the brew-house into a pinery. The high octagon summer-house you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East India captain, who has turned many a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches and chariots and chaises pass and repass under your eye. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle; and so you shall say, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a can of flip, Mr. Sterling; for it looks like a cabin in the air. If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair wind.

Canton.—Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Heidelberg.—My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord—but you'll excuse him. I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste. In the evening I shall hope for the honor of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a syllabub warm from the cow.

Lord Ogl.—I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs. Heidelberg—the very flower of delicacy and cream of politeness.

Mrs. Hei.—Oh, my lord!

Lord Ogl.—Oh, madam! (Leering at each other.)

Ster.—How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true lover's knot.

Ster.—Ay, here's none of your straight lines here, but all taste—zig-zag—crinkum-crankum—in and out—right and left—to and again—twisting and turning like a worm, my lord!

Lord Ogl.—Admirably laid out, indeed, Mr. Sterling! one can hardly see an inch beyond his nose anywhere in these walks. You are a most excellent economist of your land, and make a little go a great way. It lies together in as small parcels as if it was placed in pots out at your window in Gracechurch street.

Cant.—Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lord Ogl.—What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

Cant.—Ah! que cette similitude est drole! So clever what you say, my lor'!

Lord Ogl.—(To Fanny.) You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about?

Fanny.—Only making up a nosegay, my lord. Will your lordship do me the honor of accepting it? (Presenting it.)

Lord Ogl.—I'll wear it next my heart, madam! (Apart.) I see the young creature dotes on me!

Miss Sterling.—Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook or the nurse carry to town on Monday morning for a beau-pot. Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose and a sprig of sweet-briar?

Lord Ogl.—The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy. (Apart.) A little jealous, poor soul!

Ster.—Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

Mrs. Hei.—You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother.

Lord Ogl.—Not at all, madam. We're in the garden of Eden, you know—in the region of perpetual spring, youth and beauty. (Leering at the women, who stand.)

Mrs. Hei.—(Apart.) Quite the man of qualaty, I pertest.

Cant.—Take a my arm, my lor'.

(Lord Ogleby leans on him.)

Ster.—I'll only show his lordship my ruins and the cascade and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go in to breakfast.

Lord Ogl.—Ruins, did you say, Mr. Sterling?

Ster.—Ay, ruins, my lord! and they are reckoned very fine ones, too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

Lord Ogl.—(Going, stops.) What steeple's that we see yonder?—the parish church, I suppose.

Ster.—Ha! ha! ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord! It is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

Lord Ogl.—Very ingenious, indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than I see before me. (Leering at the women.) Simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive. Get away, Canton! (Pushing away Canton.) I want no assistance. I'll walk with the ladies.

Ster.—This way, my lord!

Lord Ogl.—Lead on, sir! We young folks will follow you. Madam!—Miss Sterling!—Miss Fanny!—I attend you.

(Exit after Sterling, gallanting the ladies.)

Cant.—(Following.) He is cock o' de game, ma foi!

(Exit. Sir John Melvil and Lovewell come forward.)

Sir John.—At length, thank heaven, I have an opportunity to unbosom. I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

Lov.—Be assured, you may depend on me.

Sir John.—You must know, then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

Lov.—How!

Sir John.—It will be no match, Lovewell.

Lov.—No match?

Sir John.—No.

Lov.—You amaze me. What should prevent it?

Sir John.—I.

Lov.—You! wherefore!

Sir John.—I don't like her.

Lov.—Very plain, indeed! I never supposed that you was extremely devoted to her from inclination, but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience rather than affection.

Sir John.—Very true. I came into the family without any impression on my mind—with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as well as another. I looked upon love—serious, sober love—as a chimera, and marriage as a thing of course, as you know most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest votaries. In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

Lov.—Another! So, so! here will be fine work. And pray who is she?

Sir John.—Who is she? who can she be but Fanny, the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny?

Lov.—Fanny! What Fanny?

Sir John.—Fanny Sterling; her sister. Is she not an angel, Lovewell?

Lov.—Her sister? Confusion! You must not think of it, Sir John.

Sir John.—Not think of it? I can think of nothing else. Nay, tell me, Lovewell! was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction toward her? You seem confounded! Why don't you answer me?

Lov.—Indeed, Sir John, this event gives me infinite concern.

Sir John.—Why so? Is she not an angel, Lovewell?

Lov.—I foresee that it must produce the worst consequences. Consider the confusion it must unavoidably create. Let me persuade you to drop these thoughts in time.

Sir John.—Never—never, Lovewell!

Lov.—You have gone too far to recede. A negotiation so nearly concluded cannot be broken off with any grace. The lawyers, you know, are hourly expected, the preliminaries al-

most finally settled between Lord Ogleby and Mr. Sterling, and Miss Sterling herself ready to receive you as a husband.

Sir John.—Why, the banns have been published, and nobody has forbidden them, 'tis true; but you know either of the parties may change their minds even after they enter the church.

Lov.—You think too lightly of this matter. To carry your addresses so far, and then to desert her—and for her sister, too! It will be such an affront to the family that they can never put up with it.

Sir John.—I don't think so; for, as to my transferring my passion from her to her sister, so much the better! for then, you know, I don't carry my affection out of the family.

Lov.—Nay, but prithee be serious, and think better of it.

Sir John.—I have thought better of it already, you see. Tell me honestly, Lovewell, can you blame me? Is there any comparison between them?

Lov.—As to that, now—why, that—is just—just as it may strike different people. There are many admirers of Miss Sterling's vivacity.

Sir John.—Vivacity! a medley of Cheapside pertness and Whitechapel pride. No, no; if I do go so far into the city for a wedding dinner, it shall be upon turtle, at least.

Lov.—But I see no probability of success; for granting that Mr. Sterling would have consented to it at first, he cannot listen to it now. Why did you not break this affair to the family before?

Sir John.—Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or perplexity? Nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet I think I know Mr. Sterling so well that, strange as my proposal may appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

Lov.—But even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

Sir John.—You are deceived a little in that particular.

Lov.—You'll find I am in the right.

Sir John.—I have some little reason to think otherwise.

Lov.—You have not declared your passion to her already?

Sir John.—Yes, I have.

Lov.—Indeed! And—and—how did she receive it?

Sir John.—I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman without receiving some little encouragement.

Lov.—Encouragement! did she give you any encouragement?

Sir John.—I don't know what you call encouragement; but she blushed—and cried—and desired me not to think of it any more; upon which I pressed her hand—kissed it—swore she was an angel—and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

Lov.—And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

Sir John.—Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised—and she got away from me, too, before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

Lov.—I! a letter! I had rather have nothing—

Sir John.—Nay, you promised me your assistance, and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion. You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

Lov.—As to that, I—your commands, you know—that is, if she— Indeed, Sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

Sir John.—Well—well—that's my concern. Ha! there she goes, by heaven! along that walk yonder, d'y'e see? I'll go to her immediately.

Lov.—You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing!

Sir John.—I would not lose this opportunity for the universe.

Lov.—Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits. The shock will be too much for her.
(Detaining him.)

Sir John.—Nothing shall prevent me. Ha! now she turns into another walk—let me go! (Breaks from him.) I shall lose her. (Going, turns back.) Be sure now to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you.

(Exit, hastily.)

Lov.—'Sdeath! I can't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face! I shall break out before my time. This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him—I am sure she could not. Ha! they are turning into the walk and coming this way. Shall I leave the place? Leave him to solicit my wife! I can't submit to it. They come nearer and nearer. If I stay, it will look suspicious. It may betray us and incense him. They are here—I must go. I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world.

(Exit.)

Enter Fanny, followed by Sir John.

Fanny.—Leave me, Sir John, I beseech you, leave me; nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations which are an affront to my character and an injury to your own honor?

Sir John.—I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it; but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse! Consider, madam, that the future happiness of my life depends on my present application to you! consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are perhaps the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

Fanny.—For shame, for shame, Sir John! Think of your previous engagements! Think of your own situation, and think of mine! What have you discovered in my conduct that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you might venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing. Let me be gone!

Sir John.—Nay, stay, madam, but one moment. Your sensibility is too great. Engagements! what engagements have been pretended on either side more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of matrimonial negotiation with a blind submission to your father and Lord Ogleby:

but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in yours.

Fanny.—Have a care, Sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretenses of the heart, half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of yours despise them for it.

Sir John.—Affection, you will allow, is involuntary. We cannot always direct it to the object on which it should fix; but when it is once inviolably attached, inviolably as mine is to you, it often creates reciprocal affection. When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and I hoped with some compassion.

Fanny.—You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit; nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment of your behavior, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you in honor to my sister. And be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph that must result from the blackest treachery to her.

(Going.)

Sir John.—One word, and I have done. (Stopping her.) Your impatience and anxiety, and the urgency of the occasion, oblige me to be brief and explicit with you. I appeal, therefore, from your delicacy to your justice. Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united. Now, as they cannot, shall not be connected otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you—and I hope to propose terms agreeable to Mr. Sterling. If, then, you don't absolutely loath, abhor and scorn me—if there is no other happier man—

Fanny.—Hear me, sir; hear my final determination. Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them; were my heart forever to remain disengaged to any other—I could not listen to your proposals. What! you on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I living under

the same roof with her, bound not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace—the peace of a whole family, and that my own, too! Away, away, Sir John! At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror. Nay, you must detain me no longer—I will go. (Going.)

Sir John.—Do not leave me in absolute despair! Give me a glimpse of hope! (Falling on his knees.)

Fanny.—I cannot. Pray, Sir John! (Struggling to go.)

Sir John.—Shall this hand be given to another? (Kissing her hand.) No—I cannot endure it! My whole soul is yours, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

Enter Miss Sterling.

Fanny.—Ha! My sister is here. Rise, for shame, Sir John!

Sir John.—Miss Sterling! (Rising.)

Miss Sterling.—I beg pardon, sir! You'll excuse me, madam! I have broken in upon you a little inopportunately, I believe—but I did not mean to interrupt you—I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotions.

Sir John.—I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but—

Miss Ster.—Oh, dear, Sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology. The thing explains itself.

Sir John.—It will soon, madam! In the meantime I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr. Sterling of the honor and integrity of my intentions. And—and—your humble servant, madam! (Exit, in confusion.)

Miss Ster.—Respect? Insolence! Esteem? Very fine, truly! And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister! will you convince my papa, too, of the integrity of your intentions?

Fanny.—Do not upbraid me, my dear sister! Indeed I don't deserve it. Believe me, you can't be more offended at his

behavior than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

Miss Ster.—Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam! It gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you. A base fellow! As for you, miss! the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good nature, never imposed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, and envious, and deceitful.

Fanny.—Indeed, you wrong me.

Miss Ster.—Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure! Did not I find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty? No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

Fanny.—Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

Miss Ster.—We shall try that, madam! I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt—for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. (Exit.)

Fanny.—(Alone.) How unhappy I am! My distresses multiply upon me. Mr. Lovewell must now become acquainted with Sir John's behavior to me—and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed by fortunate circumstances to forgive any transgressions, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcilably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace. Yet, at all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary. (Exit.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

A hall.

Enter a Servant, leading in Sergeant Flower and Counsellors Traverse and Trueman, all booted.

Servant.—This way, if you please, gentlemen! my master is at breakfast with the family at present, but I'll let him know, and he'll wait on you immediately.

Flower.—Mighty well, young man, mighty well.

Serv.—Please to favor me with your names, gentlemen.

Flow.—Let Mr. Sterling know that Mr. Sergeant Flower and two other gentlemen of the bar are come to wait on him, according to his appointment.

Serv.—I will, sir.

(Going.)

Flow.—And harkee, young man. (Servant returns.) Desire my servant—Mr. Sergeant Flower's servant—to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall with my portmanteau.

Serv.—I will, sir.

(Exit.)

Flow.—Well, gentlemen! the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits. Let me see—the Home, the Midland, and Western; ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several destinations. Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

Traverse.—The day after to-morrow.

Flow.—That is commission day with us at Warwick, too. But my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper, so it will be time enough if I am there the next morning. Besides, I have about half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again. So I will take the evening before me—and then *currente calamo*, as I say—Eh, Traverse?

Trav.—True, Mr. Sergeant, and the easiest thing in the world, too; for those country attorneys are such ignorant dogs that in case of the devise of an estate to A and his heirs forever, they'll make a query whether he takes in fee or in tail.

Flow.—Do you expect to have much to do on the home circuit these assizes?

Trav.—Not much *nisi prius* business, but a good deal on the crown side, I believe. The gaols are brim full, and some of the felons in good circumstances, and likely to be tolerable clients. Let me see—I am engaged for three highway robberies, three murders, one forgery and half a dozen larcenies, at Kingston.

Flow.—A pretty decent gaol delivery! Do you expect to bring off Darking, for the robbery on Putney Common? Can you make out your alibi?

Trav.—Oh, no! the crown witnesses are sure to prove our identity. We shall certainly be hanged; but that don't signify. But, Mr. Sergeant, have you much to do?—any remarkable cause on the Midland this circuit?

Flow.—Nothing very remarkable—except two rapes, and Rider and Western at Nottingham, for crim. con.; but, on the whole, I believe a good deal of business. Our associate tells me there are above thirty venires for Warwick.

Trav.—Pray, Mr. Sergeant, are you concerned in Jones and Thomas, at Lincoln?

Flow.—I am—for the plaintiff.

Trav.—And what do you think on't?

Flow.—A nonsuit.

Trav.—I thought so.

Flow.—Oh, no matter of doubt on't—luce clarius—we have no right in us—we have but one chance.

Trav.—What's that?

Flow.—Why, my lord chief does not go the circuit this time, and my brother Puzzle being in the commission, the cause will come on before him.

Trueman.—Ay, that may do, indeed, if you can but throw dust in the eyes of the defendant's counsel.

Flow.—True. Mr. Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair. (To Trueman.)

True.—I am, sir. I have the honor to be related to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire—go the Western circuit—and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

Flow.—Ha! and pray, Mr. Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

True.—About nine years and three-quarters.

Flow.—Ha! I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before. I wish you success, young gentleman.

Enter Sterling.

Sterling.—Oh, Mr. Sergeant Flower, I am glad to see you. Your servant, Mr. Sergeant! gentlemen, your servant! Well, are all matters concluded? has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold tight and strong? Eh, Master Sergeant?

Flow.—My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir. But then, *serius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr. Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do. My clerk has brought the writing and all other instruments along with him, and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth.

Ster.—But that damned mortgage of £60,000. There don't appear to be any other encumbrances, I hope?

Trav.—I can answer for that, sir; and that will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's portion. You agree, on your part, to come down with £80,000.

Ster.—Down on the nail. Ay, ay, my money is ready to-morrow, if he pleases: he shall have it in India bonds, or notes, or how he chooses. Your lords and your dukes, and your people at the court end of the town, stick at payments sometimes—debts unpaid, no credit lost with them—but no fear of us substantial fellows—eh, Mr. Sergeant?

Flow.—Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which above-mentioned Ogleby estate a jointure of £2,000 per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster, and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs male of Sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling lawfully to be begotten.

Trav.—Very true; and Sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford, amounting to between two and three thousand per annum, and at the death of Mr. Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand—

Enter Sir John Melvil.

Ster.—Ah, Sir John! Here we are hard at it—paving the road to matrimony; first the lawyers, then comes the doctor; let us but dispatch the long robe, we shall soon get pudding-sleeves to work, I warrant you.

Sir John.—I am sorry to interrupt you, sir, but I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me; having something particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

Ster.—Ay, with all my heart! Gentlemen, Mr. Sergeant, you'll excuse it—business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

Flow.—I must be at Warwick, Mr. Sterling, the day after.

Ster.—Nay, nay, I shan't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you. My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses. Will you take a turn in the garden, and view some of my improvements before dinner? Or will you amuse yourselves on the green with a game of bowls and a cool tankard? My servants shall attend you. Do you choose any other refreshment? Call for what you please; do as you please; make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you. Here, Thomas! Harry! William! wait on these gentlemen! (Follows the lawyers out, bawling and talking, and then returns to Sir John.) And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, Sir John?

Sir John.—After having carried the negotiations between our families to so great a length, after having assented so readily to all your proposals, as well as received so many instances of your cheerful compliance with the demands made on our part, I am extremely concerned, Mr. Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness.

Ster.—Uneasiness! What uneasiness? Where business is transacted as it ought to be, and the parties understand one another, there can be no uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife; on the same conditions I agree to receive you as a son-in-law; and as to all

the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

Sir John.—Pardon me, sir; more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of. I am myself, at this instant, in a state of inexpressible embarrassment; Miss Sterling, I know, is extremely disconcerted, too; and unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

Ster.—What the deuce is all this? I don't understand a single syllable.

Sir John.—In one word, then—it will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfill my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

Ster.—How, Sir John! Do you mean to put an affront upon my family? What! refuse to——

Sir John.—Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront nor forsake your family. My only fear is that you should desert me; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

Ster.—Why, did not you tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter?

Sir John.—True. But you have another daughter, sir——

Ster.—Well?

Sir John.—Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her; nay, Miss Sterling herself is also apprised of it; and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will no doubt recommend her to a person of equal if not superior rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

Ster.—Mighty fine, truly! Why, what the plague do you make of us, Sir John? Do you come to market for my daughter like servants at a statute fair? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the Grand Signior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave trade with them; and——

Sir John.—A moment's patience, sir! Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your family; and even now I am desirous to atone for my transgression by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

Ster.—Compensation! What compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, Sir John?

Sir John.—Come, come, Mr. Sterling; I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you, and you shall see that I don't desire a change of measures for my own gratification without endeavoring to make it advantageous to you.

Ster.—What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, Sir John?

Sir John.—I'll tell you, sir. You know that by the articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of £80,000.

Ster.—Well!

Sir John.—Now, if you will but consent to my waiving that marriage—

Ster.—I agree to your waiving that marriage? Impossible, Sir John!

Sir John.—I hope not, sir, as on my part I will agree to waive my right to £30,000 of the fortune I was to receive with her.

Ster.—Thirty thousand, d'ye say?

Sir John.—Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny with fifty thousand instead of fourscore.

Ster.—Fifty thousand—

(Pausing.)

Sir John.—Instead of fourscore.

Ster.—Why—why—there may be something in that. Let me see—Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsy with fourscore. But how can this be, Sir John? For you know I am to pay this money into the hands of my Lord Ogleby, who, I believe—between you and me, Sir John—is not overstocked with ready money at present; and threescore thousand of it, you

know, is to go to pay off the present encumbrances on the estate, Sir John.

Sir John.—That objection is easily obviated. Ten of the twenty thousand which would remain as a surplus of the four-score after paying off the mortgage, was intended by his lordship for my use, that we might set off with some little eclat on our marriage; and the other ten for his own. Ten thousand pounds, therefore, I shall be able to pay you immediately, and for the remaining twenty thousand you shall have a mortgage on that part of the estate which is to be made over to me, with whatever security you shall require for the regular payment of the interest till the principal is duly discharged.

Ster.—Why, to do you justice, Sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal; and since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family——

Sir John.—Nothing was ever farther from my thoughts, Mr. Sterling. And, after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary—such things happen every day; and as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place, nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

Ster.—True, true; and since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir John.—The very thing!

Ster.—Odso! I had quite forgot. We are reckoning with out our host here. There is another difficulty——

Sir John.—You alarm me. What can that be?

Ster.—I can't stir a step in this business without consulting my sister Heidelberg. The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offense.

Sir John.—But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent——

Ster.—I don't know that. Betsy is her darling, and I can't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favorite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first, and by the time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

Sir John.—I'll fly to her immediately; you promise me your assistance?

Ster.—I do.

Sir John.—Ten thousand thanks for it! And now, success attend me! (Going.)

Ster.—Harkee, Sir John! (Sir John returns.) Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, Sir John.

Sir John.—Oh, I am dumb—I am dumb, sir. (Going.)

Ster.—You remember it is thirty thousand.

Sir John.—To be sure I do.

Ster.—But, Sir John, one thing more. (Sir John returns.) My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

Sir John.—Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! (Offering to go.)

Ster.—(Holding him.) And when everything is agreed, we must give each other a bond to be held fast to the bargain.

Sir John.—To be sure. A bond by all means! a bond, or whatever you please. (Exit, hastily.)

Ster.—(Alone.) I should have thought of more conditions. He's in a humor to give me everything. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Another apartment.

Enter Mrs. Heidelberg and Miss Sterling.

Miss Sterling.—This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable Miss Fanny for you!

Mrs. Heidelberg.—My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her. With all her arts, she never could insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her that deceives man, woman and child, except you and me, niece.

Miss Ster.—Oh, ay; she wants nothing but a crook in her hand and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

Mrs. Hei.—Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam, when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

Miss Ster.—And then she's so mighty good to servants—"Pray, John, do this; pray, Tom, do that; thank you, Jenny"—and then so humble to her relations—"To be sure, papa! as my aunt pleases; my sister knows best." But with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be Lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

Mrs. Hei.—She Lady Melvil? Compose yourself, niece! I'll ladyship her indeed! a little creppin, cantin—she shan't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with Sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatunation here.

Miss Ster.—There I was deceived, madam. I took all their whisperings and stealing into corners to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but behold! their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr. Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

Mrs. Hei.—My spurrit to a T. My dear child! (Kisses her.) Mr. Heidelberg lost his election for member of parliament because I would not demean myself to be slobbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesemongers and greasy butchers and tallow chandlers. However, niece, I can't help diffuring a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagucity makes me still suspect that there is something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of Sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns, too; but Fanny and Mr. Lovewell made quite another guess sort of a figur, and were as perfect a pictur of two distressed lovers as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to Sir John and Fanny, I want a matter of fact.

Miss Ster.—Matter of fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not Sir John kneeling at her feet and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love and she all confu-

sion? Is not that a matter of fact? And did not Sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyer-men, get up from breakfast and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that by this time he has made proposals to him to marry my sister. Oh, that some other person, an earl or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

Mrs. Hei.—Be cool, child! You shall be Lady Melvil in spite of all their cabillins, if it costs me ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother, indeed; but I'll make them all know who governs in this family.

Miss Ster.—As I live, madam, yonder comes Sir John. A base man! I can't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant. (Disordered.)

Mrs. Hei.—Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child. I'll give it him, I warrant you; and by and by I'll come and let you know all that has passed between us.

Miss Ster.—Pray do, madam! (Looking back.) A vile wretch! (Exit, in a rage.)

Enter Sir John Melvil.

Sir John.—Your most obedient humble servant, madam! (Bowling very respectfully.)

Mrs. Hei.—Your servant, Sir John! (Dropping a half courtesy and pouting.)

Sir John.—Miss Sterling's manner of quitting the room on my approach, and the visible coldness of your behavior to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what passed this morning.

Mrs. Hei.—I am very sorry, Sir John, to be made acquainted with anything that should induce me to change the opinion which I could always wish to entertain of a person of quality. (Pouting.)

Sir John.—It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs. Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh all circumstances, I flatter myself—

Mrs. Hei.—You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behavior to my niece, Sir John. And give me leave to tell you, Sir John, that you have been drawn into

an action much beneath you, Sir John, and that I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling as an affront to myself, Sir John.

(Warmly.)

Sir John.—I would not offend you for the world, madam! but when I am influenced by a partiality for another, however ill-founded, I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honor to renounce engagements which I could not fulfill so strictly as I ought; and that you will excuse the change in my inclinations, since the new object, as well as the first, has the honor of being your niece, madam.

Mrs. Hci.—I disclaim her as a niece, Sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister, and the whole fammaly must disclaim her for her monstrous baseness and treachery.

Sir John.—Indeed, she has been guilty of none, madam. Her hand and heart are, I am sure, entirely at the disposal of yourself and Mr. Sterling.

Enter Sterling.

And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr. Sterling's consent, madam.

Mrs. Hci.—Indeed!

Sir John.—Quite certain, madam.

Sterling.—(Behind.) So! they seem to be coming to terms already. I may venture to make my appearance.

Mrs. Hci.—To marry Fanny?

(Sterling advances by degrees.)

Sir John.—Yes, madam.

Mrs. Hci.—My brother has given his consent, you say?

Sir John.—In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. (Sees Sterling.) Oh, here's Mr. Sterling, who will confirm what I have told you.

Mrs. Hci.—What! have you consented to give up your own daughter in this manner, brother?

Ster.—Give her up! no, not give her up, slster; only in case that you— (Apart to Sir John.) Zounds! I am afraid you have said too much, Sir John.

Mrs. Hei.—Yes, yes. I see now that it is true enough, what my niece told me. You are all plottin and caballin against her. Pray, does Lord Ogleby know of this affair?

Sir John.—I have not yet made him acquainted with it, madam.

Mrs. Hei.—No, I warrant you; I thought so. And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last.

Ster.—What! did you not consult my lord? Oh! fie for shame, Sir John!

Sir John.—Nay, but Mr. Sterling—

Mrs. Hei.—We, who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammalies, are to know nothing of the matter till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosaty than to countenance such a perceding. And I could not have expected such behavior from a person of your qualaty, Sir John; and as for you, brother—

Ster.—Nay, nay, but hear me, sister!

Mrs. Hei.—I am perfectly ashamed of you; have you no spurrit? no more concern for the honor of our fammaly than to consent—

Ster.—Consent? I consent? As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent. Did I consent, Sir John?

Sir John.—Not absolutely, without Mrs. Heidelberg's consent. But in case of her approbation—

Ster.—Ay, I grant you, if my sister approved; but that's quite another thing, you know— (To Mrs. Heidelberg.)

Mrs. Hei.—Your sister approve, indeed! I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling. What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands and exchanged for the younger? I am surprised how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

Ster.—I tell you, I never did listen to it. Did not I say that I would be entirely governed by my sister, Sir John? and unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny—

Mrs. Hei.—I agree to his marrying Fanny? abominable! The man is absolutely out of his senses. Can't that wise head

of yours foresee the consequences of all this, brother Sterling? Will Sir John take Fanny without a fortin? No! After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest? No! Does not this overturn the whole system of the fammaly? Yes, yes, yes! You know I was always for my niece Betsy's marrying a person of the very first qualaty. That was my maxum, and therefore much the largest settlement was, of course, to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common councilman for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

Sir John.—But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

Mrs. Hei.—What, at the expense of her elder sister! Oh, fie, Sir John! How could you bear to hear of such an indig-naty, brother Sterling?

Ster.—I? Nay, I shan't hear of it, I promise you. I can't hear of it, indeed, Sir John.

Mrs. Hei.—But you have heard of it, brother Sterling. You know you have, and sent Sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I shan't forsake my niece, I assure you. Ah! if my poor, dear Mr. Heidelberg and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so.

Ster.—Did I, Sir John? (Apart, to him.) Nay, speak! Bring me off, or we are ruined.

Sir John.—Why, to be sure, to speak the truth——

Mrs. Hei.—To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both. But have a care what you are about, brother! have a care, I say. The counsellors are in the house, I hear, and if every-thing is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years. I'll go over to Holland and settle with Mr. Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own fammaly shall never be the better for a farden of my money, I promise you. (Exit.)

Ster.—I thought so. I knew she would never agree to it.

Sir John.—'Sdeath, how unfortunate! what can we do, Mr. Sterling?

Ster.—Nothing.

Sir John.—What, must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

Ster.—It can't be helped, Sir John. The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself that she threatens to leave us. My brother Heidelberg was a warm man, a very warm man, and died worth a plum at least; a plum! ay, I warrant you he died worth a plum and a half.

Sir John.—Well; but if I—

Ster.—And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents, and old South Sea annuities, besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to our family.

Sir John.—I can only say, sir—

Ster.—Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure, Sir John.

Sir John.—Nay, but I am even willing to—

Ster.—Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so you see the balance is against you, Sir John.

Sir John.—But is there no way, do you think, of prevailing on Mrs. Heidelberg to grant her consent?

Ster.—I am afraid not. However, when her passion is a little abated—for she's very passionate—you may try what can be done; but you must not use my name any more, Sir John.

Sir John.—Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

Ster.—I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

Sir John.—I'll apply to him this very day; and if he should prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr. Sterling?

Ster.—Ay, ay; I shall be glad to oblige you when it is in my power; but as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so, your servant, Sir John. (Exit.)

Sir John.—What a situation am I in! Breaking off with her whom I was bound by treaty to marry; rejected by the object of my affections, and embroiled by this turbulent woman, who governs the whole family. And yet opposition, instead of smothering, increases my inclination. I must have her. I'll apply immediately to Lord Ogleby, and if he can but bring over the aunt to our party, her influence will overcome the scruples and delicacy of my dear Fanny, and I shall be the happiest of mankind. (Exit.)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A room.

Enter Sterling, Mrs. Heidelberg and Miss Sterling.

Sterling.—What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

Mrs. Heidelberg.—To-morrow morning. I've given orders about it already.

Ster.—Indeed?

Mrs. Hei.—Positively.

Ster.—But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

Mrs. Hei.—Not half so odd as her behavior, brother. This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

Ster.—I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsy.

Miss Sterling.—No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not. For all Fanny's baseness to me, I am sure I would not do or say anything to hurt her with you or my aunt, for the world.

Mrs. Hei.—Hold your tongue, Betsy! I will have my way. When she is packed off, everything will go on as it should do. Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can

act with vigor on our part; and sending her out of the way shall be the purliminary step to all the rest of my proceedings.

Ster.—Well, but sister—

Mrs. Hei.—It does not signify talking, brother Sterling, for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will. (To Miss Sterling.) Come along, child. The postman shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why, I will—and so there's an end of the matter.

(Bounces out of the room with Miss Sterling.)

Reënter Mrs. Heidelberg.

One word more, brother Sterling! I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby of Sir John Melvil's behavior. Do this, brother; show a proper regard for the honor of your fammaly yourself, and I shall throw in my mite to the raising of it. If not—but now you know my mind. So act as you please, and take the consequences. (Exit.)

Ster.—The devil's in the women for tyranny! Mothers, wives, mistresses or sisters, they always will govern us. As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it. "I will do this," and "You shall do that," and "You shall do t'other, or else the fammaly shan't have a farden of—" (Mimicking.) So absolute with her money! But, to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute, and so we must e'en make the best of her. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

A garden.

Enter Lord Ogleby and Canton.

Lord Ogleby.—What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away? Why? wherefore? What's the meaning of all this?

Canton.—Je ne sçais pas. I know nothing of it.

Lord Ogl.—It can't be—it shan't be. I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and I had much rather that the rest of the family were annihilated than that she should leave us.

Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of 'Change Alley—the aunt, that's always endeavoring to be a fine lady—and the pert sister, forever showing that she is one, are horrid company, indeed, and without her would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing; isn't she, Cant.?

Cant.—Dere is very good sympatie entre vous and dat young lady, mi lor'.

Lord Ogl.—I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals, your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs and Devilbergs; if she goes, I'll positively go too.

Cant.—In de same post-chay, my lor'? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neider, too—ha! ha! ha!

Lord Ogl.—Prithee hold thy foolish tongue, Cant. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires? My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects. I fly as naturally to a fine girl—

Cant.—As de fine girl to you, my lor': ha, ha, ha! you always fly togedre like un pair de pigeons.

Lord Ogl.—Like un pair de pigeons. (Mocks him.) Vous etes un sot, Mons. Canton. Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never seest me hadiner, but you suspect mischief, you old fool, you.

Cant.—I am fool, I confess, hut not always fool in dat, mi lor', he, he, he!

Lord Ogl.—He, he, he! Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee here (takes out his box), a most ridiculous superfluity, but a pinch of thee, now and then, is a more delicious treat.

Cant.—You do me great honneur, mi lor'.

Lord Ogl.—'Tis fact, upon my soul. Thou art properly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes and profound thinking—ha, ha, ha!

Cant.—Your flatterie, mi lor', vill make me too prode.

Lord Ogl.—The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure; hut prithee, Cant., is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

Cant.—(Looking with a glass.) En vérité, 'tis she, mi lor'—'tis one of the pigeons—de pigeons d'amour.

Lord Ogl.—Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey. (Smiling.)

Cant.—I am monkée, I am ole, but I have eye, I have ear, and little understand, now and den.

Lord Ogl.—Taisez vous, bête!

Cant.—Elle vous attend, mi lor'. She vill make a love to you.

Lord Ogl.—Will she? Have at her, then! A fine girl can't oblige me more. Egad, I find myself a little enjoué—come along, Cant! she is but in the next walk; but there is such a deal of this damned crinkum-crankum, as Sterling calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them. Allons, Mons. Canton, allons donc!

(Exeunt, singing in French.)

SCENE III.

Another part of the garden.

Enter Lovewell and Fanny.

Lovewell.—My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress! It overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery.

Fanny.—But how can it be effected before my departure?

Lov.—I'll tell you. Lord Ogleby seems to entertain a visible partiality for you, and notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behavior, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. He is vain to an excess, but withal extremely good-natured, and would do anything to recommend himself to a lady. Do you open the whole affair of our marriage to him immediately. It will come with more irresistible persuasion from you than myself; and I doubt not but you'll gain his friendship and protection at once. His influence and authority will put an end to Sir John's solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

Fanny.—Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

Lov.—I have heard him and Canton, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut tree by the parlor door.

If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately.

Fanny.—Dreadful as the task is, I'll do it. Anything is better than this continual anxiety.

Lov.—By that time the discovery is made, I will appear to second you. Ha! there comes my lord. Now, my dear Fanny, summon up all your spirits, plead our cause powerfully, and be sure of success. (Going.)

Fanny.—Ay, don't leave me!

Lov.—Nay, you must let me.

Fanny.—Well, since it must be so, I'll obey you, if I have the power. Oh, Lovewell!

Lov.—Consider, our situation is very critical. To-morrow morning is fixed for your departure, and if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another. He approaches. I must retire. Speak, my dear Fanny, speak and make us happy!

(Exit.)

Fanny.—Good heaven, what a situation am I in! what shall I do? what shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

Enter Lord Ogleby and Canton.

Lord Ogleby.—To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind, and 'tis fortunate that one man has broken in upon your reverie, for the credit of our sex. I say one, madam, for poor Canton, here, from age and infirmities, stands for nothing.

Canton.—Noting at all, indeed.

Fanny.—Your lordship does me great honor. I had a favor to request, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—A favor, madam! To be honored with your commands is an inexpressible favor done to me, madam.

Fanny.—If your lordship could indulge me with the honor of a moment's— What's the matter with me? (Aside.)

Lord Ogl.—The girl's confused—he!—here's something in the wind, faith. I'll have a tête-à-tête with her. Allez vous en!

(To Canton.)

Cant.—I go—ah, pauvre mademoiselle! my lor', have pitie upon the poor pigeone!

Lord Ogl.—I'll knock you down, *Cant.*, if you are impertinent. (Smiling.)

Cant.—Den I mus away. (Shuffles along.) You are mosh please, for all dat. (Aside and exit.)

Fanny.—I shall sink with apprehension. (Aside.)

Lord Ogl.—What a sweet girl! she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family.

Fanny.—My lord, I— (She courtesies and blushes.)

Lord Ogl.—(Addressing her.) I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have this moment the honor of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming with my tongue what my eyes perhaps have but too weakly expressed—that I am literally—the humblest of your servants.

Fanny.—I think myself greatly honored by your lordship's partiality to me, but it distresses me that I am obliged in my present situation to apply to it for protection.

Lord Ogl.—I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to show my zeal. Beauty to me is a religion in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr. I'm in tolerable spirits, faith! (Aside.)

Fanny.—There is not, perhaps, at this moment a more distressed creature than myself. Affection, duty, hope, despair and a thousand different sentiments are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

Lord Ogl.—Does it, madam? Venus forbid! My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women. (Aside and smiling.) Take courage, madam! dear Miss Fanny, explain. You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you—my heart, madam—I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy. By my honor, I am.

Fanny.—Then I will venture to unburden my mind. Sir John Melvil, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

Lord Ogl.—How, madam! has Sir John made his addresses to you?

Fanny.—He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say that my duty to my family, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship (courtesying), made me shudder at his addresses.

Lord Ogl.—Charming girl! Proceed, my dear Miss Fanny, proceed!

Fanny.—In a moment—give me leave, my lord!—but if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure—

Lord Ogl.—Impossible, by all the tender powers! Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

Fanny.—Then, my lord, Sir John's addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time, as—as— (Hesitating.)

Lord Ogl.—As what, madam?

Fanny.—As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another.

Lord Ogl.—(Aside.) If this is not plain, the devil's in it. But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know: tell me the how, the when and the where— Tell me—

Enter Canton, hastily.

Canton.—My lor', my lor', my lor'!

Lord Ogl.—Damn your Swiss impertinence! How durst you interrupt me in the most critical melting moment that ever love and beauty honored me with?

Cant.—I demande pardonne, my lor'! Sir John Melvil, my lor', sent me to beg you do him de honneur to speak a little to your lordship.

Lord Ogl.—I'm not at leisure—I'm busy! Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll—

Cant.—Fort bien, my lor'. (Canton goes out on tiptoe.)

Lord Ogl.—By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death; but as no punishment ought to disturb

the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

Fanny.—The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it—and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burden.

Lord Ogl.—(Aside.) What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation. (Aloud.) I presume, madam—and as you have flattered me by making me a party concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption—that—

Fanny.—Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me interest your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depend—

Lord Ogl.—Upon me, madam?

Fanny.—Upon you, my lord.

(Sighs.)

Lord Ogl.—(Aside.) There's no standing this: I have caught the infection—her tenderness dissolves me. (Sighs.)

Fanny.—And should you too severely judge of a rash action which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed—

Lord Ogl.—(Taking her hand.) Thou amiable creature—command my heart, for it is vanquished; speak but thy virtuous wishes, and enjoy them.

Fanny.—I cannot, my lord—indeed, I cannot—Mr. Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me. (Exit in tears.)

Lord Ogl.—(Alone.) How the devil could I bring her to this? It is too much—too much—I can't bear it. I must give way to this amiable weakness. (Wipes his eyes.) My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. How blind have I been to the desolation I have made! How could I possibly imagine that a little partial attention and tender civilities to this young creature should have gathered to this burst of passion! Can I be a man and withstand it? No! I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite apropos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby House to-morrow morning—but what the devil! Miss Sterling, too! What mischief's in the wind now?

Enter Sterling and Miss Sterling.

Sterling.—My lord, your servant! I am attending my daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair. Speak to his lordship, Betsy.

Lord Ogl.—Your eyes, Miss Sterling—for I always read the eyes of a young lady—betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

Miss Sterling.—I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord!

Lord Ogl.—I cannot commend my kinsman's behavior, madam. He has behaved like a false knight, I must confess. I have heard of his apostasy. Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

Miss Ster.—Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of Sir John's inconstancy.

Lord Ogl.—Nay, now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny, but believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me, Miss Fanny has no passion for Sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed.

(Conceitedly.)

Miss Ster.—Not upon Mr. Lovewell, my lord; for I have great reason to think that her seeming attachment to him is, by his consent, made use of as a blind to cover her designs upon Sir John.

Lord Ogl.—Lovewell! No, poor lad! She does not think of him.

(Smiling.)

Miss Ster.—Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of Sir John's artifice and my sister's dissimulation! You don't know her—indeed, my lord, you don't know her—a base, insinuating, perfidious—— It is too much. She has been beforehand with me, I perceive. Such unnatural behavior to me! But since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that some way or other I will have revenge. (Exit.)

Ster.—This is foolish work, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty.

Ster.—It is touching, indeed, my lord—and very moving for a father.

Lord Ogl.—To be sure, sir! You must be distressed beyond measure! Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject and proceed to business.

Ster.—With all my heart, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—You see, Mr. Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

Ster.—And very sorry I am to see it, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr. Sterling?

Ster.—"Tis my only wish at present—my omnium, as I may call it.

Lord Ogl.—Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

Ster.—Shall they, my lord? But how—how?

Lord Ogl.—I'll marry in your family.

Ster.—What! my sister Heidelberg?

Lord Ogl.—You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr. Sterling. No, not your sister—but your daughter.

Ster.—My daughter?

Lord Ogl.—Fanny!—now the murder's out!

Ster.—What! you, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—Yes—I, I, Mr. Sterling!

Ster.—No, no, my lord—that's too much. (Smiling.)

Lord Ogl.—Too much? I don't comprehend you.

Ster.—What! you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me, what will the folks say?

Lord Ogl.—Why, what will they say?

Ster.—That you're a bold man, my lord—that's all.

Lord Ogl.—Mr. Sterling, this may be city wit, for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

Ster.—To be sure, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Then I'll explain. My nephew won't marry your eldest daughter—nor I, neither. Your youngest daughter won't marry him. I will marry your youngest daughter.

Ster.—What! with a youngest daughter's fortune, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—With any fortune, or no fortune at all, sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the demon interest sinks before him. No, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me—

Ster.—Who told you so, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—Her own sweet self, sir.

Ster.—Indeed?

Lord Ogl.—Yes, sir; our affection is mutual; your advantage double and treble—your daughter will be a countess directly—I shall be the happiest of beings—and you'll be father to an earl instead of a baronet.

Ster.—But what will my sister say?—and my daughter?

Lord Ogl.—I'll manage that matter—nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

Ster.—Well said, my lord! your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution! But if you'll venture, I have no objection, if my sister has none.

Lord Ogl.—I'll answer for your sister, sir. Apropos! the lawyers are in the house; I'll have the articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

Ster.—Very well; and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want, and I shall leave you to manage matters with my sister. You must excuse me, my lord, but I can't help laughing at the match. He! he! he! what will the folks say? (Exit.)

Lord Ogl.—What a fellow am I going to make a father of! He has no more feeling than the post in his warehouse. But Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family.

Enter Lovewell, hastily.

Lovewell.—I beg your lordship's pardon, my lord; are you alone, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company—the best of company.

Lov.—My lord!

Lord Ogl.—I never was in such exquisite, enchanting company since my heart first conceived or my senses tasted pleasure.

Lov.—Where are they, my lord? (Looking about.)

Lord Ogl.—In my mind, sir.

Lov.—What company have you there, my lord? (Smiling.)

Lord Ogl.—My own ideas, sir, which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstasy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each in perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity.

Lov.—I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

Lord Ogl.—You shall rejoice at it, sir; my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

Lov.—Shall I, my lord?—then I understand you—you have heard—Miss Fanny has informed you——

Lord Ogl.—She has. I have heard, and she shall be happy—'tis determined.

Lov.—Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

Lord Ogl.—Oh, yes; poor creature, how could she help it? 'Twas unavoidable—fate and necessity.

Lov.—It was indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me——

Lord Ogl.—And so it did the poor girl, faith.

Lov.—She trembled to disclose the secret and declare her affections.

Lord Ogl.—The world, I believe, will not think her affections ill-placed.

Lov.—(Bowing.) You are too good, my lord. And do you really excuse the rashness of the action?

Lord Ogl.—From my very soul, Lovewell.

Lov.—Your generosity overpowers me. (Bowing.) I was afraid of her meeting with a cold reception.

Lord Ogl.—More fool you, then.

Who pleads her cause with never-failing beauty,

Here finds a full redress.

(Strikes his breast.)

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

Lov.—Her beauty, my lord, is her least merit. She has an understanding——

Lord Ogl.—Her choice convinces me of that.

Lov.—(Bowing.) That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

Lord Ogl.—No—no—not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

Lov.—Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart and generosity of mind, as well as you are with the inferior beauties of her face and person——

Lord Ogl.—I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that were it not for the cold, unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

Lov.—My lord!

Lord Ogl.—I would, by all that's honorable in man and amiable in woman.

Lov.—Marry her! What do you mean, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—Miss Fanny Sterling that is—the Countess of Ogleby that shall be.

Lov.—I am astonished!

Lord Ogl.—Why, could you expect less from me?

Lov.—I did not expect this, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—Trade and accounts have destroyed your feeling.

Lov.—No, indeed, my lord.

(Sighs.)

Lord Ogl.—The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures. I never do anything by halves, do I, Lovewell?

Lov.—No, indeed, my lord. (Sighs.) What an accident!

Lord Ogl.—What's the matter, Lovewell? Thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties. Why don't you wish me joy, man?

Lov.—Oh, I do, my lord.

(Sighs.)

Lord Ogl.—She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

Lov.—But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution?

Lord Ogl.—No, sir; I am above consideration when my desires are kindled.

Lov.—But consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, Sir John.

Lord Ogl.—Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr. Lovewell.

Lov.—Mr. Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to Sir John.

Lord Ogl.—Sir John has already refused Mr. Sterling's daughter.

Lov.—But what will become of Miss Sterling, my lord?

Lord Ogl.—What's that to you? You may have her, if you will. I depend upon Mr. Sterling's city philosophy to be reconciled to Lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law, instead of Sir John Melvil, Baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought to that without having recourse to his calculations? Eh, Lovewell?

Lov.—But, my lord, that is not the question.

Lord Ogl.—Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer. I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

Enter Sir John Melvil.

What news with you, Sir John? You look all hurry and impatience—like a messenger after a battle.

Sir John.—After a battle, indeed, my lord. I have this day had a severe engagement, and, wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered resolution to declare what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

Lord Ogl.—To the business, then, and be as concise as possible; for I am upon the wing. Eh, Lovewell?

(He smiles, and Lovewell bows.)

Sir John.—I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

Lord Ogl.—Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion—shan't I, Lovewell?

(Smiles, and Lovewell bows.)

Sir John.—Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you—that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

Lord Ogl.—I'm not at all surprised at it—she's a bitter portion, that's the truth of it; but as you were to swallow it, and not I, it was your business, and not mine. Anything more?

Sir John.—But this, my lord—that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

Lord Ogl.—Oh, yes—by all means; have you any hopes there, nephew? Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell?

(Smiles and winks at Lovewell.)

Lov.—I think not, my lord.

(Gravely.)

Lord Ogl.—I think so, too; but let the fool try.

Sir John.—Will your lordship favor me with your good offices to remove the chief obstacle to the match—the repugnance of Mrs. Heidelberg?

Lord Ogl.—Mrs. Heidelberg! Had not you better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble: won't it, Lovewell. (Smiles.) But, do what you please, it will be the same thing to me—won't it, Lovewell? (Conceitedly.) Why don't you laugh at him?

Lov.—I do, my lord.

(Forces a smile.)

Sir John.—And your lordship will endeavor to prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

Lord Ogl.—I'll speak to Mrs. Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

Sir John.—Your generosity transports me.

Lord Ogl.—Poor fellow! what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town. (Aside.)

Sir John.—And your lordship is not offended at this seeming inconstancy?

Lord Ogl.—Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*

—lawful game—and every man who is qualified has a natural right to pursue them; Lovewell as well as you, and I as well as either of you. Every man shall do his best, without offense to any—what say you, kinsmen?

Sir John.—You have made me happy, my lord.

Lov.—And me, I assure you, my lord.

Lord Ogl.—And I am superlatively so—allons donc!—to horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine—
suivons l'amour. (Sings. Exeunt, severally.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

Fanny's apartment.

Enter Lovewell and Fanny, followed by Betty.

Fanny.—Why did you come so soon, Mr. Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber door.

Betty.—My mistress is right, sir! evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good not to expect mischief from them.

Lovewell.—But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

Betty.—I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

Fanny.—I do expect the worst. Prithce, Betty, return to the outward door and listen if you hear anybody in the gallery, and let us know directly.

Betty.—I warrant you, madam—the Lord bless you both!
(Goes out at the door.)

Fanny.—What did my father want with you this evening?

Lov.—He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to Lord Ogleby.

Fanny.—And why did you not obey him?

Lov.—Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account; but as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

Fanny.—Hark! hark! Bless me, how I tremble! I feel the terrors of guilt. Indeed, Mr. Lovewell, this is too much for me.

Lov.—And for me, too, my sweet Fanny. Your apprehensions make a coward of me. But what can alarm you? Your aunt and sister are in their chambers, and you have nothing to fear from the rest of the family.

Fanny.—I fear everybody, and everything, and every moment—my mind is in continual agitation and dread; indeed, Mr. Lovewell, this situation may have very unhappy consequences. (Weeps.)

Lov.—But it shan't. I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risk of maintaining you by the hardest labor, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity. What! shall I sacrifice all my best hopes and affections in your dear health and safety for the mean, and in such case the meanest consideration—of our fortune! Were we to be abandoned by all our relations, we have that in our hearts and minds will weigh against the most affluent circumstances. I should not have proposed the secrecy of our marriage but for your sake, and with hopes that the most generous sacrifice you have made to love and me might be less injurious to you by waiting a lucky moment of reconciliation.

Fanny.—Hush! hush! for heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm!—your generosity gets the better of your prudence; you will be heard, and we shall be discovered. I am satisfied—indeed I am. Excuse this weakness, this delicacy—this what you will. My mind's at peace—indeed it is—think no more of it, if you love me!

Lov.—That one word has charmed me, as it always does, to the most implicit obedience; it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you for a moment. (Kisses her.)

Reënter Betty.

Betty.—(In a low voice.) I am sorry to disturb you.

Fanny.—Ha! what's the matter?

Lov.—Have you heard anybody?

Betty.—Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you, too, or I'm mistaken; if they had seen you, too, we should have been in a fine quandary!

Fanny.—Prithee, don't prate now, Betty!

Lov.—What did you hear?

Betty.—I was preparing myself, as usual, to take me a little nap——

Lov.—A nap!

Betty.—Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head for fear of the earache from the keyhole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of a buzzing, which I first took for a guat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so with my hand.

Fanny.—Well, well—and so——

Betty.—And so, madam, when I heard Mr. Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder, too; and pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise.

(Makes an indistinct noise like speaking.)

Fanny.—Well, and what did they say?

Betty.—Oh! I could not understand a word of what was said.

Lov.—The outward door is locked?

Betty.—Yes; and I bolted it, too, for fear of the worst.

Fanny.—Why did you? they must have heard you if they were near.

Betty.—And I did it on purpose, madam, and coughed a little, too, that they might not hear Mr. Lovewell's voice. When I was silent, they were silent, and so I came to tell you.

Fanny.—What shall we do?

Lov.—Fear nothing! we know the worst; it will only bring on our catastrophe a little too soon. But Betty might fancy this noise—she's in the conspiracy, and can make a man a mouse at any time.

Betty.—But I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters. I am sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

Fanny.—He compliments you; don't be a fool! (To Lovewell.) Now you have set her tongue a-running, she'll mutter for an hour. I'll go and hearken for myself. (Exit.)

Betty.—(Half aside, and muttering.) I'll turn my back on no girl for sincerity and service.

Lov.—Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, Betty, for one and the other.

Betty.—I'm not mercenary, neither. I can live on a little, with a good carreter.

Reënter Fanny.

Fanny.—All seems quiet. Suppose, my dear, you go to your own room. I shall be much easler then; and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

Betty.—(Half aside, and muttering.) You may discover, if you please; but for my part, I shall still be secret.

Lov.—Should I leave you now, if they are still upon the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult about to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the door after her; we can fasten this, and when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

Betty.—Shall I, madam?

Fanny.—Do let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after. I would not have you surpris'd here for the world. Pray leave me! I shall be quite myself again, if you'll oblige me.

Lov.—I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll be gone this moment. (Going.)

Fanny.—Let us listen first at the door, that you may not be intercepted. Betty shall go first, and if they lay hold of her—

Betty.—They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. (Going hastily.)

Fanny.—Softly, softly, Betty! don't venture out if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you! See, Mr. Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

Lov.—But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

(Exeunt all, softly.)

SCENE II.

A gallery which leads to several bed-chambers.

Enter Miss Sterling, leading Mrs. Heidelberg, in a nightcap.

Miss Sterling.—This way, dear madam, and then I'll tell you all.

Mrs. Heidelberg.—Nay, but niece—consider a little—don't drag me out in this figur—let me put on my fly-cap! If any of my lord's fammaly, or the counsellors-at-law, should be stirring, I should be perdigus disconsarted.

Miss Ster.—But, my dear madam, a moment is an age, in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber. Oh, she's all craft and wickedness!

Mrs. Hei.—Well, but softly, Betsy! You are all in emotion; your mind is too much flustrated; you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take your natural rest. Compose yourself, child; for if we are not as warysome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole fammaly.

Miss Ster.—We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself, or if anybody, it is my sister; my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change-broker; so that if you, madam, don't continue my friend—if you forsake me—if I am to lose my best hopes and consolation—in your tenderness—and affections—I had better—at once—glve up the matter—and let my sister enjoy the fruits of her treachery, trample with scorn upon the rights of her elder sister, the will of the best of aunts, and the weakness of a too-interested father.

(She pretends to be bursting into tears all this speech.)

Mrs. Hei.—Don't, Betsy—keep up your spurrit—I hate whimpering—I am your friend—depend upon me in every particular—but be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered.

Miss Ster.—I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiaval sister would not rest till she had broken my heart. I was so uneasy that I could not

stay in my room; but when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward; she immediately came back and told me that they were in high consultation; that she had heard only, for it was in the dark, my sister's maid conduct Sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

Mrs. Hei.—And how did you conduct yourself in this dilemma?

Miss Ster.—I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said distinctly; and you may depend upon it that Sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before morning, if we don't prevent them.

Mrs. Hei.—Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband (that is to be) locked up in her chamber! at night, too! I tremble at the thoughts!

Miss Ster.—Hush, madam! I hear something.

Mrs. Hei.—You frighten me—let me put on my fly-cap—I would not be seen in this fig for the world.

Miss Ster.—'Tis dark, madam; you can't be seen.

Mrs. Hei.—I pertest there's a candle coming, and a man, too!

Miss Ster.—Nothing but servants; let us retire a moment.

(They retire.)

Enter Brush, half drunk, laying hold of the Chambermaid, who has a candle in her hand.

Chambermaid.—Be quiet, Mr. Brush; I shall drop down with terror!

Brush.—But my sweet and most amiable chambermaid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason; that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

Chamb.—But you may do me harm, Mr. Brush, and a great deal of harm, too; pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you; I tremble like an asp.

Brush.—But they shan't hear us; and therefore I say it again: if you have no love, hear a little reason!

Chamb.—I wonder at your impudence, Mr. Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a town rake, I see, and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

Brush.—Nothing, by heavens, but your frowns, most amiable chambermaid; I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink port, and your master's is so heady that a pint of it oversets a claret-drinker.

Chamb.—Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me?

Brush.—I'll take care of you, by all that's honorable.

Chamb.—You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out, if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's. (Pointing.)

Brush.—And that my Lord Ogleby's, and that my lady what-d'ye-call-'em; I don't mind such folks when I am sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that, too.

Chamb.—More shame for you, Mr. Brush!—you terrify me—you have no modesty.

Brush.—Oh, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher! For instance: I reverence Miss Fanny; with all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself; but for her sister——

Miss Ster.—There, there, madam; all in a story!

Chamb.—Bless me, Mr. Brush!—I heard something.

Brush.—Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon. If it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two damned things at once.

Chamb.—Law! law! how you blaspheme! We shall have the house upon our heads for it.

Brush.—No, no, it will last our time; but, as I was saying, the eldest sister—Miss Jezebel——

Chamb.—Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

Brush.—No—we have smoked her already; and unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us—no, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

Chamb.—You're a monstrous rake, Mr. Brush, and don't care what you say.

Brush.—Why, for that matter, my dear—where's old mother Heidelberg's room?

Mrs. Hei.—(Coming forward.) There's no bearing this—you profligate monster!

Chamb.—Ha! I am undone!

Brush.—Zounds! Here she is, by all that's monstrous.

(Runs off.)

Miss Ster.—A fine discourse you have had with that fellow!

Mrs. Hei.—And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

Miss Ster.—What have you to say for yourself?

Chamb.—I can say nothing—I am so frightened and so ashamed; but indeed I am virtuous—I am virtuous, indeed.

Mrs. Hei.—Well, well—don't tremble so, but tell us what you know of this horrible plot, here.

Miss Ster.—We'll forgive you if you'll discover all.

Chamb.—Why, madam—don't let me betray my fellow-servants. I shan't sleep in my bed if I do.

Mrs. Hei.—Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

Chamb.—Oh, dear! what shall I do?

Mrs. Hei.—Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

Chamb.—Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry. Mr. Brush forced us to make a kind of a holiday night of it.

Miss Ster.—Holiday! for what?

Chamb.—Nay, I only made one.

Miss Ster.—Well, well—but upon what account?

Chamb.—Because, as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said—that his honor, Sir John—was to marry Miss Fanny instead of your ladyship.

Miss Ster.—And so you make a holiday for that. Very fine!

Chamb.—I did not make it, ma'am.

Mrs. Hei.—But do you know nothing of Sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

Chamb.—No, indeed, ma'am!

Miss Ster.—Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

Chamb.—No, as I hope for marcy, ma'am!

Mrs. Hei.—Well, I'll put an end to all this directly. Do you run to my brother Sterling—

Chamb.—Now, ma'am? 'Tis so very late, ma'am—

Mrs. Hei.—I don't care how late it is. Tell him there are thieves in the house—that the house is afire—tell him to come here immediately. Go, I say!

Chamb.—I will, I will, though I'm frightened out of my wits. (Exit.)

Mrs. Hei.—Do you watch here, my dear, and I'll put myself in order to face them. We'll plot 'em, and counterplot 'em, too. (Exit into her chamber.)

Miss Ster.—I have as much pleasure in this revenge as in being made a countess! Ha! they are unlocking the door. Now for it. (Retires.)

(Fanny's door is unlocked, and Betty comes out with a candle. Miss Sterling approaches her.)

Betty.—(Calling within.) Sir, sir! now's your time—all's clear. (Seeing Miss Sterling.) Stay, stay—not yet—we are watched.

Miss Ster.—And so you are, Madam Betty!

(Miss Sterling lays hold of her, while Betty locks the door and puts the key into her pocket.)

Betty.—(Turning round.) What's the matter, ma'am?

Miss Ster.—Nay, that you shall tell my father and aunt, madam.

Betty.—I am no tell-tale, ma'am, and no thief; they'll get nothing from me.

Miss Ster.—You have a great deal of courage, Betty; and considering the secrets you have to keep, you have occasion for it.

Betty.—My mistress shall never repent her good opinion of me, ma'am.

Enter Sterling.

Sterling.—What is all this? What's the matter? Why am I disturbed in this manner?

Miss Ster.—This creature, and my distresses, sir, will explain the matter.

Reënter Mrs. Heidelberg with another head-dress.

Mrs. Heidelberg.—Now I'm prepared for the rancounter. Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of wickedness?

Ster.—Not I; but what is it? Speak? I was got into my little closet—all the lawyers were in bed, and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of Lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and whether it's fire, or thieves, or murder, I am quite in the dark.

Miss Ster.—Who's in that chamber?

(Detaining Betty, who seemed to be stealing away.)

Betty.—My mistress.

Miss Ster.—And who is with your mistress?

Betty.—Why, who should there be?

Miss Ster.—Open the door, then, and let us see!

Betty.—The door is open, madam. (*Miss Sterling goes to the door.*) I'll sooner die than peach. (*Exit, hastily.*)

Miss Ster.—The door's locked, and she has got the key in her pocket.

Mrs. Hei.—There's impudence, brother! piping hot from your daughter Fanny's school!

Ster.—But zounds! what is all this about? you tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the particulars.

Mrs. Hei.—Sir John Melvil is locked up in your daughter's bed-chamber. There is the particular!

Ster.—The devil he is! That's bad!

Miss Ster.—And he has been there some time, too.

Ster.—Ditto!

Mrs. Hei.—Ditto! worse and worse, I say. I'll raise the house and expose him to my lord and the whole fammaly.

Ster.—By no means! we shall expose ourselves, sister! the best way is to insure privately—let me alone! I'll make him marry her to-morrow morning.

Miss Ster.—Make him marry her! this is beyond all patience! You have thrown away all your affection, and I shall do as much by my obedience: unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it. Had they made their escape, I should have been exposed to the derision of the world; but the deriders shall be derided; and so—help! help, there! thieves! thieves!

Mrs. Hel.—Tit for tat, Betsy! you are right, my girl.

Ster.—Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the whole family—the devil's in the girl.

Mrs. Hel.—No, no; the devil's in you, brother. I am ashamed of your principles. What! would you connive at your daughter's being locked up with her sister's husband? Help! thieves! thieves! I say. (Cries out.)

Ster.—Sister, I beg you! daughter, I command you! If you have no regard for me, consider yourselves! We shall lose this opportunity of ennobling our blood and getting above twenty per cent. for our money.

Miss Ster.—What! by my disgrace and my sister's triumph! I have a spirit above such mean considerations; and to show you that it is not a low-bred, vulgar, 'Change Alley spirit—help! help! thieves! thieves! I say.

Ster.—Ay, ay, you may save your lungs—the house is in an uproar. Women, at best, have no discretion; but in a passion they'll fire a house, or burn themselves in it, rather than not be revenged.

Enter Canton, in a night-gown and slippers.

Canton.—Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great noise—dis tantamarre?

Ster.—Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

Lord Ogleby.—(Calls within.) Brush! Brush! Canton! where are you? What's the matter? (Rings a bell.) Where are you?

Ster.—'Tis my lord calls, Mr. Canton.

Cant.—I come, mi lor'!

(Exit Canton. Lord Ogleby still rings.)

Sergeant Flower.—(Calls within.) A light! a light, here! where are the servants? Bring a light for me and my brothers.

Ster.—Lights here! lights for the gentlemen!

(Exit Sterling.)

Mrs. Hei.—My brother feels, I see—your sister's turn will come next.

Miss Ster.—Ay, ay; let it go round, madam; it is the only comfort I have left.

Reënter Sterling, with lights, before Sergeant Flower (with one boot and a slipper) and Traverse.

Sterling.—This way, sir! this way, gentlemen!

Flow.—Well; but Mr. Sterling, no danger, I hope. Have they made a burglarious entry? Are you prepared to repulse them? I am very much alarmed about thieves at circuit time. They would be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

Traverse.—No danger, Mr. Sterling—no trespass, I hope?

Ster.—None, gentlemen, but of those ladies' making.

Mrs. Hei.—You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen, that all your labors and studies about this young lady are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is at this moment locked up with this lady's younger sister.

Flow.—The thing is a little extraordinary, to be sure; but why were we to be frightened out of our beds for this? Could not we have tried this cause to-morrow morning?

Miss Ster.—But, sir, by to-morrow morning, perhaps, even your assistance would not have been of any service—the birds now in that cage would have flown away.

Enter Lord Ogleby, in his robe-de-chambre, nightcap, etc., leaning on Canton.

Lord Ogleby.—I had rather lose a limb than my night's rest—what's the matter with you all?

Ster.—Ay, ay, 'tis all over! here's my lord, too.

Lord Ogl.—What's all this shrieking and screaming? where's my angelic Fanny? she's safe, I hope?

Mrs. Hel.—Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is locked up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

Lord Ogl.—My nephew! then will I be excommunicated.

Mrs. Hel.—Your nephew, my lord, has been plotting to run away with the younger sister, and the younger sister has been plotting to run away with your nephew; and if we had not watched them, and called up the fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scotland by this time.

Lord Ogl.—Look'ee, ladies! I know that Sir John has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny; and I know, too, that Miss Fanny has conceived a violent passion for another person; and I am so well convinced of the rectitude of her affections that I will support them with my fortune, my honor and my life. Eh, shan't I, Mr. Sterling? (Smiling.) What say you?

Ster.—(Sulkily.) To be sure, my lord. (Aside.) These bawling women have been the ruin of everything.

Lord Ogl.—But come; I'll end this business in a trice. If you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and Mr. Sterling will insure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the keyhole.

Mrs. Hel.—The horrid creatures! I say, my lord, break the door open.

Lord Ogl.—Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate! Now to our experiment!

(Advancing toward the door.)

Miss Ster.—Now what will they do? My heart will beat through my bosom.

Enter Betty with the key.

Betty.—There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord; we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies.

(Going to unlock the door.)

Mrs. Hel.—There's impudence.

Lord Ogl.—The mystery thickens. Lady of the bed-chamber! (To Betty.) Open the door, and entreat Sir John Melvil—for the ladies will have it that he is there—to appear and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors. Call Sir John Melvil into court.

Enter Sir John Melvil on the other side.

Sir John.—I am here, my lord.

Mrs. Hei.—Heyday!

Miss Ster.—Astonishment!

Sir John.—What is all this alarm and confusion? There is nothing but hurry in the house; what is the reason of it?

Lord Ogl.—Because you have been in that chamber; have been! nay, you are there at this moment, as these ladies have protested. So don't deny it.

Trav.—This is the clearest alibi I ever knew, Mr. Sergeant.

Flow.—Luce clarius.

Lord Ogl.—Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolics, it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you. But come (to Betty), open the door, and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

Betty.—(Opening the door.) Madam, you are wanted in this room. (Pertly.)

Enter Fanny, in great confusion.

Miss Ster.—You see she's ready dressed—and what confusion she's in.

Mrs. Hei.—Ready to pack off, bag and baggage! Her guilt confounds her!

Flow.—Silence in the court, ladies!

Fanny.—I am confounded, indeed, madam!

Lord Ogl.—Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but with your own peculiar modesty declare your state of mind. Pour conviction into their ears, and raptures into mine. (Smiling.)

Fanny.—I am at this moment the most unhappy—most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the

power to reveal a secret which to conceal has been the misfortune and misery of my—my— (Faints away.)

Lord Ogl.—She faints; help! help! for the fairest and best of women!

Betty.—(Running to her.) Oh, my dearest mistress! help, help, there! (Speaking all at once.)

Sir John.—Ha! let me fly to her assistance.)

Lovewell rushes out of the chamber.

Lovewell.—My Fanny in danger! I can restrain myself no longer. Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this! Speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny! Let me but hear thy voice; open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of life!

(During this speech they are all in amazement.)

Miss Ster.—Lovewell! I am easy!

Mrs. Hci.—I am thunderstruck!

Lord Ogl.—I am petrified!

Sir John.—And I undone!

Fanny.—(Recovering.) Oh, Lovewell! even supported by thee, I dare not look my father nor his lordship in the face.

Ster.—What now! did not I send you to London, sir?

Lord Ogl.—Eh! What! How's this? By what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bed-chamber?

Lov.—By that right which makes me the happiest of men, and by a title which I would not forego for any the best of kings could give.

Betty.—I could cry my eyes out to hear his magnanimity.

Lord Ogl.—I am annihilated!

Ster.—I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak. Zounds! what have you to say to me? Lovewell, you are a villain. You have broken your word with me.

Fanny.—Indeed, sir, he has not; you forbade him to think of me when it was out of his power to obey you; we have been married these four months.

Ster.—And he shan't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery! As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam.

Fanny.—Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable forever without your forgiveness.

Ster.—Lovewell, you shall leave my house directly—and you shall follow him, madam. (To Fanny.)

Lord Ogl.—And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Lookyee, Mr. Sterling, there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them is to forgive the cause of them—which I do from my soul. Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune; 'tis a debt of honor, and must be paid. You swore as much, too, Mr. Sterling, but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without errors excepted.

Ster.—I am a father, my lord; hut for the sake of all fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls like herself to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

Lov.—I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies with minds like my Fanny's would startle at the very shadow of vice; and when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

Mrs. Hel.—Indiscretion, quotha! A mighty pretty delicate word to express ohedience!

Lord Ogl.—For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls, I pity them. And you must forgive them, too. Come, come; melt a little of your flint, Mr. Sterling!

Ster.—Why, why, as to that, my lord—to be sure, he is a relation of yours, my lord—what say you, sister Heidelberg?

Mrs. Hel.—The girl's ruined, and I forgive her.

Ster.—Well—so do I, then. Nay, no thanks. (To Lovewell and Fanny, who seem preparing to speak.) There's an end of the matter.

Lord Ogl.—But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

Lov.—Your kindness, my lord. I can scarce believe my own senses. They are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation and gratitude; I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship. For you, Mr. Sterling, if every moment of my life, spent gratefully in your service, will in some measure compensate the want of fortune, you perhaps will not repent your goodness to me. And you, ladies, I flatter myself, will not for the future suspect me of artifice and intrigue. I shall be happy to oblige and serve you. As for you, Sir John—

Sir John.—No apologies to me, Lovewell; I do not deserve any. All I have to offer in excuse for what has happened is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, and yourself, and that lady (who I hope will pardon my behavior) a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you that, light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honor enough to rejoice at your happiness.

Lov.—And now, my dearest Fanny, though we are seemingly the happiest of beings, yet all our joys will be damped if his lordship's generosity, and Mr. Sterling's forgiveness, should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation and consent of these our best benefactors.

THE BELLE'S STRATAGEM

A COMEDY

BY

MRS. HANNAH COWLEY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DORICOURT.

HARDY.

SIR GEORGE TOUCHWOOD.

FLUTTER.

SAVILLE.

VILLERS.

COURTALL.

DICK.

SIR GEORGE'S SERVANT.

GIBSON.

SAVILLE'S SERVANT.

LETITIA HARDY.

MRS. RACKETT.

LADY FRANCES.

MISS OGLE.

KITTY WILLIS.

Mountebank, Maskers, et al.

PRELUDE.

The authoress of this favorite comedy was one of the best-known writers of poems and miscellaneous pieces in her day, but is now remembered chiefly by this work, which is still occasionally performed.

The Belle's Stratagem, first played at Covent Garden in 1780, immediately established itself as a stage favorite, and once in every season was performed before the royal family. The heroine was acted by Miss Younge—afterward Mrs. Pope—who, it is said, was too much agitated to suppress her actual tears, when, at the end of the play, she came to the part where Letitia unmasks and discovers herself to Doricourt. The dialogue is often sprightly; there are several clever and amusing situations, and the tone and sentiment of the play are such as could not fail to commend it to an English or American audience.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lincoln's Inn.

Enter Saville, followed by Saville's Servant, looking round,
as if at a loss.

Saville.—Lincoln's Inn! Well, but where to find him, now I am in Lincoln's Inn? Where did he say his master was?

Servant.—He only said in Lincoln's Inn, sir.

Sav.—That's pretty! And your wisdom never inquired at whose chambers?

Serv.—Sir, you spoke to the servant yourself.

Sav.—If I was too impatient to ask questions, you ought to have taken directions, blockhead!

Enter Courtall, singing.

Ha, Courtall! Bid him keep the horses in motion, and then inquire at all the chambers round. (Exit Saville's Servant.) What the devil brings you to this part of the town? Have any of the Long Robes handsome wives, sisters or chamber-maids?

Courtall.—Perhaps they have; but I came on a different errand; and had thy good fortune brought thee here half an hour sooner, I'd have given thee such a treat—ha, ha, ha!

Sav.—I'm sorry I missed it; what was it?

Court.—I was informed, a few days since, that my cousins Fallow were come to town, and desired earnestly to see me at their lodgings in Warwick Court, Holborn. Away drove I, painting them all the way as so many Hebes. They came from the farthest part of Northumberland, had never been in town, and in course were made up of rusticity, innocence and beauty.

Sav.—Well!

Court.—After waiting thirty minutes, during which there was a violent bustle, in bounced five sallow damsels, four of them Maypoles; the fifth, Nature, by way of variety, had bent the *Æsop* style. But they all opened at once, like hounds on a fresh scent: "O cousin Courtall! How do you do, cousin Courtall? Lord, cousin, I am glad you are come! We want you to go with us to the park, and the plays, and the opera, and Almack's, and all the fine places!" The devil, thought I, my dears, may attend you, for I am sure I won't. However, I heroically staid an hour with them, and discovered the virgins were all come to town with the hopes of leaving it—wives; their heads full of knights, baronets, fops and adventures.

Sav.—Well, how did you get off?

Court.—Oh, pleaded a million engagements. However, conscience twitched me; so I breakfasted with them this morning, and afterward 'squired them to the gardens here, as the most private place in town; and then took a sorrowful leave, complaining of my hard, hard fortune, that obliged me to set off immediately for Dorsetshire—ha, ha, ha!

Sav.—I congratulate your escape! Courtall at Almack's, with five awkward country cousins!—ha, ha, ha! Why, your existence as a man of gallantry could never have survived it.

Court.—Death and fire! had they come to town, like the rustics of the last age, to see St. Paul's, the lions and the wax-work—at their service—but the cousins of our days come up ladies, and, with the knowledge they glean from magazines and pocket-books, fine ladies; laugh at the bashfulness of their grandmothers and boldly demand their entrées in the first circles.

Sav.—Come, give me some news. I have been at war with woodcocks and partridges these two months, and am a stranger to all that has passed out of their region.

Court.—Oh, enough for three gazettes. The ladies are going to petition for a bill that during the war every man may be allowed two wives.

Sav.—'Tis impossible they should succeed, for the majority of both houses know what it is to have one!

Court.—But pr'ythee, Saville, how came you to town?

Sav.—I came to meet my friend Doricourt, who, you know, is lately arrived from Rome.

Court.—Arrived! Yes, faith, and has cut us all out! His carriage, his liveries, himself, are the rage of the day! His first appearance set the whole town in a ferment, and his valet is besieged by levees of tailors, habit makers and other ministers of fashion, to gratify the impatience of their customers for becoming à la mode de Doricourt.

Sav.—Indeed! Well, those little gallantries will soon be over; he's on the point of marriage.

Court.—Marriage! Doricourt on the point of marriage! 'tis the happiest tidings you could have given, next to his being hanged. Who is the bride-elect?

Sav.—I never saw her; but 'tis Miss Hardy, the rich heiress—the match was made by the parents and the courtship began on their nurses' knees; master used to crow at miss and miss used to chuckle at master.

Court.—Oh! then by this time they care no more for each other than I do for my country cousins.

Sav.—I don't know that; they have never met since thus high, and so, probably, have some regard for each other.

Court.—Never met! Odd!

Sav.—A whim of Mr. Hardy's; he thought his daughter's charms would make a more forcible impression, if her lover remained in ignorance of them till his return from the continent.

Enter Saville's Servant.

Servant.—Mr. Doricourt, sir, has been at Counsellor Pleadwell's, and gone about five minutes. (Exit Saville's Servant.)

Sav.—Five minutes! Zounds! I have been five minutes too late all my lifetime! Good-morrow, Courtall; I must pursue him. (Going.)

Court.—Promise to dine with me to-day; I have some honest fellows. (Going off.)

Sav.—Can't promise; perhaps I may. (Looking off.) See there! there's a bevy of female Patagonians coming down upon us.

Court.—By the Lord, then, it must be my strapping cousins. I dare not look behind me. Run, man, run! (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

An apartment at Doricourt's.

Enter Doricourt.

Doricourt.—(Speaking to a servant without.) I shall be too late for St. James'; bid him come immediately.

Enter Saville.

Most fortunate! My dear Saville, let the warmth of this embrace speak the pleasure of my heart.

Saville.—Well, this is some comfort, after the scurvy reception I met with in your hall. I prepared my mind, as I came up stairs, for a bon jour, a grimace and an adieu.

Doric.—Why so?

Sav.—Judging of the master from the rest of the family. What the devil is the meaning of that flock of foreigners below, with their parchment faces and snuffy whiskers? What! can't an Englishman stand behind your carriage, buckle your shoe or brush your coat?

Doric.—Stale, my dear Saville, stale! Englishmen make the best soldiers, citizens, artisans and philosophers in the world; but the very worst footmen. I keep French fellows and Germans, as the Romans kept slaves; because their own countrymen had minds too enlarged and haughty to descend with a grace to the duties of such a station.

Sav.—A good excuse for a bad practice.

Doric.—On my honor, experience will convince you of its truth. A Frenchman neither hears, sees nor breathes but as his master directs; and his whole system of conduct is comprised in one short word—obedience! An Englishman reasons, forms opinions, cogitates and disputes; the one is the mere creature of your will, the other a being conscious of equal importance in the universal scale with yourself, and is therefore your judge, whilst he wears your livery, and decides on your actions with the freedom of a censor.

Sav.—And this in defense of a custom I have heard you execrate, together with all the adventitious manners imported by our travelled gentry. Now to start a subject which must please you. When do you expect Miss Hardy?

Doric.—Oh, the hour of expectation is past. She is arrived, and I this morning had the honor of an interview at Pleadwell's. The writings were ready; and, in obedience to the will of Mr. Hardy, we met to sign and seal.

Sav.—Has the event answered? Did your heart leap or sink when you beheld your mistress?

Doric.—Faith, neither one nor t'other; she's a fine girl, as far as mere flesh and blood goes. But——

Sav.—But what?

Doric.—Why, she's only a fine girl; complexion, shape and features; nothing more.

Sav.—Is not that enough?

Doric.—No! she should have spirit! fire! l'air enjoué! that something, that nothing, which everybody feels and which nobody can describe in the resistless charmers of Italy and France.

Sav.—Thanks to the parsimony of my father, that kept me from travel! I would not have lost my relish for true, unaffected English beauty, to have been quarrelled for by all the belles of Versailles and Florence.

Doric.—Pho! thou hast no taste. English beauty! 'Tis insipidity; it wants the zest, it wants poignancy, Frank! Why, I have known a French woman, indebted to nature for no one thing but a pair of decent eyes, reckon in her suite as many counts, marquises and petits maitres as would satisfy three dozen of our first-rate toasts. I have known an Italian marquizina make ten conquests in stepping from her carriage, and carry her slaves from one city to another, whose real, intrinsic beauty would have yielded to half the little grisettes that pace your Mall on a Sunday.

Sav.—And has Miss Hardy nothing of this?

Doric.—If she has, she was pleased to keep it to herself. I was in the room half an hour before I could catch the color of her eyes; and every attempt to draw her into conversation occasioned so cruel an embarrassment that I was reduced to the necessity of news, French fleets and Spanish captures, with her father.

Sav.—So Miss Hardy, with only beauty, modesty and merit, is doomed to the arms of a husband who will despise her.

Doric.—You are unjust. Though she has not inspired me with violent passion, my honor secures her felicity.

Sav.—Come, come, Doricourt; you know very well that when the honor of a husband is locum tenens for his heart, his wife must be as indifferent as himself, if she is not unhappy.

Doric.—Pho! never moralize without spectacles. But, as we are upon the tender subject, how did you bear 'Touchwood's marrying Lady Frances?

Sav.—You know I never looked up to her with hope; and Sir George is every way worthy of her.

Doric.—A la mode Anglaise, a philosopher, even in love.

Sav.—Come, I detain you—you seem dressed at all points, and, of course, have an engagement.

Doric.—To St. James'. I dine at Hardy's and accompany them to the masquerade in the evening—but breakfast with me to-morrow and we'll talk of our old companions—for I swear to you, Saville, the air of the continent has not effaced one youthful prejudice or attachment.

Sav.—With an exception to the case of ladies and servants.

Doric.—True; there I plead guilty.

(Exeunt Doricourt and Saville.)

SCENE III.

An apartment in Hardy's house.

Enter Flutter.

Flutter.—Ha, Villers, have you seen Mrs. Rackett? Miss Hardy, I find, is out.

Villers.—I have not seen her yet. I have made a voyage to Lapland since I came in. (Flinging away a book.) A lady at her toilet is as difficult to be moved as a Quaker. (Yawning.) What events have happened in the world since yesterday? have you heard?

Flut.—Oh, yes; I stopped at Tattersall's, as I came by, and there I found Lord James Jessamy, Sir William Wilding and Mr.— But, now I think on't, you shan't know a syllable of the matter; for I have been informed you never believe above one-half of what I say.

Vil.—My dear fellow, somebody has imposed upon you most egregiously! Half! Why, I never believe one-tenth part of what you say; that is, according to the plain and literal

expression; but, as I understand you, your intelligence is amusing.

Flut.—That's very hard, now, very hard. I never related a falsity in my life unless I stumbled on it by mistake; and if it were otherwise, your dull matter-of-fact people are infinitely obliged to those warm imaginations which soar into fiction to amuse you; for, positively, the common events of this little dirty world are not worth talking about, unless you embellish them! Ha! here comes Mrs. Rackett. Adieu to weeds, I see! All life!

Enter Mrs. Rackett.

Enter, madam, in all your charms! Villers has been abusing your toilet for keeping you so long; but I think we are much obliged to it, and so are you.

Mrs. Rackett.—How so, pray? Good-morning t'ye both. Here, here's a hand apiece for you. (They kiss her hands.)

Flut.—How so? Because it has given you so many beauties.

Mrs. R.—Delightful compliment! What do you think of that, Villers?

Vil.—That he and his compliments are alike—showy, but won't bear examining. So you brought Miss Hardy to town last night?

Mrs. R.—Yes; I should have brought her before, but I had a fall from my horse that confined me a week—I suppose, in her heart, she wished me hanged a dozen times an hour.

Flut.—Why?

Mrs. R.—Had she not an expecting lover in town all the time? She meets him this morning at the lawyer's. I hope she'll charm him; she's the sweetest girl in the world.

Vil.—Vanity, like murder, will out. You have convinced me you think yourself more charming.

Mrs. R.—How can that be?

Vil.—No woman ever praises another unless she thinks herself superior in the very perfections she allows.

Flut.—No man ever ralls at the sex unless he is conscious he deserves their hatred.

Mrs. R.—Thank ye, Flutter—I'll owe ye a bouquet for that; I am going to visit the new-married lady, Frances Touchwood; who knows her husband?

Flut.—Everybody.

Mrs. R.—Is there not something odd in the character?

Vil.—Nothing, but that he is passionately fond of his wife, and so petulant in his love that he opened the cage of a favorite bullfinch and set it to catch butterflies, because she rewarded its song with her kisses.

Mrs. R.—Intolerable monster! Such a brute deserves——

Vil.—Nay, nay, nay, nay; this is your sex, now. Give a woman but one stroke of character, off she goes, like a ball from a racket—sees the whole man, marks him down for an angel or a devil, and so exhibits him to her acquaintance. This monster—this brute—is one of the worthiest fellows upon earth; sound sense and a liberal mind, but dotes on his wife to such excess that he quarrels with everything she admires, and is jealous of her tippet and nosegay.

Mrs. R.—Oh, less love for me, kind Cupid! I can see no difference between the torment of such an affection and hatred.

Flut.—Oh, pardon me; inconceivable difference—inconceivable; I see it as clearly as your bracelet. In the one case the husband would say, as Mr. Snapper said t'other day, zounds! madam, do you suppose that my table, and my house, and my pictures—apropos des Bottes—there was the divinest Plague of Athens sold yesterday at Langford's! the dead figures so natural—you would have sworn they had been alive. Lord Primrose bid five hundred. "Six," said Lady Carmine. "A thousand," said Ingot, the nabob. Down went the hammer. "A rouleau for your bargain," said Sir Jeremy Jingle. And what answer do you think Ingot made him?

Mrs. R.—Why, took the offer.

Flut.—"Sir, I would oblige you, but I buy this picture to place in the nursery; the children have already got Whittington and his Cat!—'tis just this size, and they'll make good companions."

Mrs. R.—Ha, ha, ha! Well, I protest, that's just the way, now; the nabobs and their wives outbid one at every sale, and the creatures have no more taste——

Vil.—There again! You forget this story is told by Flutter, who always remembers everything but the circumstances and the person he talks about; 'twas Ingot who offered a rouleau for the bargain and Sir Jeremy Jingle who made the reply.

Flut.—Egad, I believe you are right. Well, the story is as good one way as t'other, you know. Good-morning; I am going to Mrs. Crotchet's.

Vil.—I'll venture every figure in your tailor's bill you make some blunder there.

Flut.—(Turning back.) Done! my tailor's bill has not been paid these two years; and I'll open my mouth with as much care as Mrs. Bridget Button, who wears cork plumpers in each cheek, and never hazards more than six words, for fear of showing them. (Exit.)

Mrs. R.—'Tis a good-natured, insignificant creature, let in everywhere and cared for nowhere. There's Miss Hardy, returned from Lincoln's Inn; she seems rather chagrined.

Vil.—Then I leave you to your communications.

Enter Letitia.

Adieu! I am rejoiced to see you so well, madam! but I must tear myself away.

Letitia.—Don't vanish in a moment.

Vil.—Oh, inhuman! you are two of the most dangerous women in town. Staying here to be cannonaded by four such eyes is equal to a rencontre with Paul Jones, or a midnight march to Omoa! They'll swallow the nonsense for the sake of the compliment. (Aside.) (Exit.)

Let.—And this odious silk—how unbecoming it is! I was bewitched to choose it. (Throwing herself on a chair and looking in a pocket glass, Mrs. Rackett staring at her.) Did you ever see such a fright as I am to-day?

Mrs. R.—Yes I have seen you look much worse.

Let.—How can you be so provoking? If I do not look this morning worse than ever I looked in my life, I am naturally a fright. You shall have it which way you will.

Mrs. R.—Just as you please; but, pray, what is the meaning of all this?

Let.—(Rising.) Men are all dissemblers, flatterers, deceivers! Have I not heard, a thousand times, of my hair, my eyes, my shape—all made for victory? and to-day, when I bent my whole heart on one poor conquest, I have proved that all those imputed charms amount to nothing, for Doricourt saw them unmoved. A husband of fifteen months could not have examined me with more cutting indifference.

Mrs. R.—Then you return it like a wife of fifteen months, and be as indifferent as he.

Let.—Ay, there's the sting! The blooming boy that left his image in my young heart is, at four and twenty, improved in every grace that fixed him there. It is the same face that my memory and my dreams constantly painted to me; but its graces are finished and every beauty heightened. How mortifying to feel myself at the same moment his slave and an object of perfect indifference to him!

Mrs. R.—How are you certain that was the case? Did you expect him to kneel down before the lawyer, his clerks and your father to make oath of your beauty?

Let.—No; but he should have looked as if a sudden ray had pierced him; he should have been breathless! speechless! for O! Caroline, all this was I!

Mrs. R.—I am sorry you were such a fool. Can you expect a man, who has courted and been courted by half the fine women in Europe, to feel like a girl from a boarding school? He is the prettiest fellow you have seen, and in course bewilders your imagination; but he has seen a million of pretty women, child, before he saw you; and his first feelings have been over long ago.

Let.—Your raillery distresses me; but I will touch his heart or never be his wife.

Mrs. R.—Absurd and romantic! If you have no reason to believe his heart preëngaged, be satisfied; if he is a man of honor, you'll have nothing to complain of.

Let.—Nothing to complain of? Heavens! shall I marry the man I adore with such an expectation as that?

Mrs. R.—And when you have fretted yourself pale, my dear, you'll have mended your expectation greatly.

Let.—(Pausing.) Yet I have one hope. If there is any power whose peculiar care is faithful love, that power I invoke to aid me.

Enter Hardy.

Hardy.—Well, now, wasn't I right? Ay, Letty! Ay, cousin Rackett! wasn't I right? I knew 'twould be so. He was all agog to see her before he went abroad; and if he had, he'd have thought no more of her face, maybe, than his own.

Mrs. R.—Maybe not half so much.

Har.—Ay, maybe so; but I see into things; exactly as I foresaw, to-day he fell desperately in love with the wench—he, he, he!

Let.—Indeed, sir! how did you perceive it?

Har.—That's a pretty question! How do I perceive everything? How did I foresee the fall of corn and the rise of taxes? How did I know that if we quarrelled with America Norway logs would be dearer? How did I foretell that a war would sink the funds? How did I forewarn Parson Homily that if he didn't some way or other contrive to get more votes than Rubric he'd lose the lectureship? How did I—but what the devil makes you so dull, Letitia? I thought to have found you popping about, as brisk as the jacks of your harpsichord.

Let.—Surely, sir, 'tis a very serious occasion.

Har.—Pho! pho! girls should never be grave before marriage. How did you feel, cousin, beforehand, eh?

Mrs. R.—Feel! why, exceedingly full of cares.

Har.—Did you?

Mrs. R.—I could not sleep for thinking of my coach, my liveries and my chairmen; the taste of clothes I should be presented in distracted me for a week; and whether I should be married in white or lilac gave me the most cruel anxiety.

Let.—And is it possible that you felt no other care?

Har.—And pray, of what sort may your cares be, Mrs. Letitia? I begin to foresee, now, that you have taken a dislike to Doricourt.

Let.—Indeed, sir, I have not.

Har.—Then what's all this melancholy about? Ain't you a-going to be married? and what's more, to a sensible man? and, what's more to a young girl, to a handsome man? And what's all this melancholy for, I say?

Mrs. R.—Why, because he is handsome and sensible, and because she's over head and ears in love with him; all which, it seems, your foreknowledge had not told you a word of.

Let.—Fie, Caroline!

Har.—Well, come; do you tell me what's the matter, then. If you don't like him, hang the signing and sealing—he shan't have you; and yet I can't say that, neither; for you know that estate, that cost his father and me upwards of fourscore thousand pounds, must go all to him if you won't have him: if he won't have you, indeed, 'twill be all yours. All that's clear—engrossed upon parchment, and the poor, dear man set his hand to it while he was a-dying. "Ah," said I, "I foresee you'll never live to see them come together; but their first son shall be christened Jeremlah, after you—that I promise you." But come, I say, what is the matter? Don't you like him?

Let.—I fear, sir—if I must speak—I fear I was less agreeable in Mr. Doricourt's eyes than he appeared in mine.

Har.—There you are mistaken; for I asked him, and he told me he liked you vastly. Don't you think he must have taken a fancy to her? (To Mrs. Rackett.)

Mrs. R.—Why, really, I think so, as I was not by.

Let.—My dear sir, I am convinced he has not; but if there is spirit or invention in woman, he shall.

Har.—Right, girl; go to your toilet—

Let.—It is not my toilet that can serve me; but a plan has struck me, if you will not oppose it, which flatters me with brilliant success.

Har.—Oppose it! Not I, indeed. What is it?

Let.—Why, sir, it may seem a little paradoxical, but as he does not like me enough, I want him to like me still less, and will at our next interview endeavor to heighten his indifference into dislike.

Har.—Who the devil could have foreseen that?

Mrs. R.—Heavens and earth! Letitia, are you serious?

Let.—As serious as the most important business of my life demands.

Mrs. R.—Why endeavor to make him dislike you?

Let.—Because 'tis much easier to convert a sentiment into its opposite than to transform indifference into tender passion.

Mrs. R.—That may be good philosophy, but I'm afraid you'll find it a bad maxim.

Let.—I have the strongest confidence in it. I am inspired with unusual spirits, and on this hazard willingly stake my chance for happiness. I am impatient to begin my measures.

(Exit.)

Har.—Can you foresee the end of this, cousin?

Mrs. R.—No, sir; nothing less than your penetration can do that, I am sure; and I can't stay now to consider it. I am going to call on the Ogles, and then to Lady Frances Touchwood's, and then to an auction, and then—I don't know where; but I shall be at home time enough to witness this extraordinary interview. Good-by.

(Exit.)

Har.—Well, 'tis an odd thing; I can't understand it; but I foresee Letty will have her way, and so I shan't give myself the trouble to dispute it.

(Exit.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

Sir George Touchwood's house.

Enter Doricourt and Sir George Touchwood.

Doricourt.—Married! Ha, ha, ha! you, whom I heard in Paris say such things of the sex, are in London a married man.

Sir George.—The sex is still what it has ever been, since la petite morale banished substantial virtues; and rather than have given my name to one of your high-bred, fashionable dames, I'd have crossed the line in a fire-ship and married a Japanese.

Doric.—Yet you have married an English beauty; yea, and a beauty born in high life.

Sir G.—True; but she has a simplicity of heart and manners that would have become the fair Hebrew damsels toasted by the patriarchs.

Doric.—Ha, ha! Why, thou art a downright matrimonial Quixote. My life on't, she becomes as mere a town lady in six months as though she had been bred to the trade.

Sir G.—Common—common. (Contemptuously.) No, sir; Lady Frances despises high life so much, from the ideas I have given her, that she'll live in it like a salamander in fire.

Doric.—I'll send thee off to St. Evreux this night, drawn at full length, and colored after nature.

Sir G.—Tell him, then, to add to the ridicule, that Touchwood glories in the name of husband; that he has found in one Englishwoman more beauty than Frenchmen ever saw, and more goodness than French women can conceive.

Doric.—Well, enough of description. Introduce me to this phoenix; I came on purpose.

Sir G.—Introduce! Oh, ay, to be sure! I believe Lady Frances is engaged just now—but another time. How handsome the dog looks to-day! (Aside.)

Doric.—Another time!—but I have no other time. 'Sdeath! this is the only hour I can command this fortnight.

Sir G.—I am glad to hear it, with all my soul! (Aside.) So then you can't dine with us to-day? That's very unlucky.

Doric.—Oh, yes—as to dinner—yes, I can, I believe, contrive to dine with you to-day.

Sir G.—Pshaw! I didn't think on what I was saying; I meant supper. You can't sup with us?

Doric.—Why, supper will be rather more convenient than dinner. But you are fortunate—if you had asked me any other night, I could not have come.

Sir G.—To-night! 'Gad, now I recollect, we are particularly engaged to-night. But to-morrow night—

Doric.—Why, look ye, Sir George, 'tis very plain you have no inclination to let me see your wife at all; so here I sit. (Throws himself on the sofa.) There's my hat, and here are my legs—now I shan't stir till I have seen her; and I have no

engagements. I'll breakfast, dine and sup with you every day this week.

Sir G.—Was there ever such a provoking wretch! (Aside.) But to be plain with you, Doricourt, I and my house are at your service; but you are a damned agreeable fellow, and the women, I observe, always simpler when you appear. For these reasons I had rather, when Lady Frances and I are together, that you should forget that we are acquainted further than a nod, a smile or a how d'ye?

Doric.—Very well.

Sir G.—It is not merely yourself, in propria persona, that I object to; but if you are intimate here, you'll make my house still more the fashion than it is; and it is already so much so that my doors are of no use to me. I married Lady Frances to engross her to myself; yet, such is the blessed freedom of modern manners, that in spite of me, her eyes, thoughts and conversation are continually divided among all the flirts and coxcombs of fashion.

Doric.—To be sure, I confess that kind of freedom is carried rather too far. 'Tis hard one can't have a jewel in one's cabinet but the whole town must be gratified with its lustre. He shan't preach me out of seeing his wife, though. (Aside.)

Sir G.—Well, now, that's reasonable. When you take time to reflect, Doricourt, I always observe you decide right; and therefore I hope——

Enter Gibson.

Gibson.—Sir, my lady desires——

Sir G.—I am particularly engaged.

Doric.—Oh, Lord, that shall be no excuse in the world! (Leaping from the sofa.) Lead the way, Gibson. I'll attend your lady.
(Exit, following Gibson.)

Sir G.—What the devil possessed me to talk about her? Here, Doricourt! (Running after him.) Doricourt!

(Exit Sir George.)

Enter Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle, followed by a servant.

Mrs. Rackett.—Acquaint your lady that Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle are here.

Miss Ogle.—I shall hardly know Lady Frances, 'tis so long since I was in Shropshire.

Mrs. R.—And I'll be sworn you never saw her out of Shropshire. Her father kept her locked up with his caterpillars and shells, and loved her beyond anything but a blue butterfly and a petrified frog!

Miss O.—Ha, ha, ha! Well, 'twas a cheap way of bringing her up. You know he was very poor, though a lord, and very high-spirited, though a virtuoso. In town, her pantheons, operas and robes de cour would have swallowed his seaweeds, moths and monsters in six weeks! Sir George, I find, thinks his wife a most extraordinary creature: he has taught her to despise everything like fashionable life, and boasts that example will have no effect on her.

Mrs. R.—There's a great degree of impertinence in all that. I'll try to make her a fine lady, to humble him.

Miss O.—That's just the thing I wish.

Enter Lady Frances Touchwood and servant.

Lady Frances.—I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Mrs. Rackett. Miss Ogle, I rejoice to see you: I should have come to you sooner, but I was detained in conversation by Mr. Dorlcourt.

Mrs. R.—Pray make no apology; I am quite happy that we have your ladyship in town at last. What stay do you make?

Lady F.—A short one. Sir George talks with regret of the scenes we have left; and as the ceremony of presentation is over, will, I believe, soon return.

Miss O.—Sure he can't be so cruel. Does your ladyship wish to return so soon?

Lady F.—I have not the habit of consulting my own wishes; but I think, if they decide, we shall not return immediately. I have yet hardly formed an idea of London.

Mrs. R.—I shall quarrel with your lord and master if he dares to think of depriving us of you so soon. How do you dispose of yourself to-day?

Lady F.—Sir George is going with me this morning to the mercer's, to choose a silk; and then——

Mrs. R.—Choose a silk for you! Ha, ha, ha! Sir George chooses your laces, too, I hope; your gloves and your pin-cushions!

Lady F.—Madam!—

Mrs. R.—I am glad to see you blush, my dear Lady Frances. These are strange, homespun ways! If you do these things, pray keep them secret. Lord bless us! If the town should know your husband chooses your gowns!

Miss O.—You are very young, my lady, and have been brought up in solitude. The maxims you learned among wood nymphs in Shropshire won't pass current here, I assure you.

Mrs. R.—Why, my dear creature, you look quite frightened. Come, you shall go with us to an exhibition and an auction. Afterwards we'll take a turn in the Park, and then drive to Kensington; so we shall be at home by four to dress; and in the evening I'll attend you to Lady Brilliant's masquerade.

Lady F.—I shall be very happy to be of your party, if Sir George has no engagements.

Mrs. R.—What! Do you stand so low in your own opinion that you dare not trust yourself without Sir George? If you choose to play Darby and Joan, my dear, you should have stayed in the country; 'tis an exhibition not calculated for London, I assure you.

Miss O.—What! I suppose, my lady, you and Sir George will be seen pacing it comfortably round the canal, arm in arm, and then go lovingly into the same carriage, dine tête-à-tête, spend the evening at piquet, and so go soberly to bed at eleven! Such a snug plan may do for an attorney and his wife, but for Lady Frances Touchwood, 'tis as unsuitable as linsey-woolsey, or a black bonnet at the opera!

Lady F.—These are rather new doctrines to me! But, my dear Mrs. Rackett, you and Miss Ogle must judge of these things better than I can. As you observe, I am but young, and may have caught absurd opinions. Here is Sir George!

Reënter Sir George Touchwood.

Sir George.—'Sdeath, another room full! (Aside.)

Lady F.—My love! Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle.

Mrs. R.—(Sir George crosses to Mrs. Rackett.) Give you joy, Sir George. We came to rob you of Lady Frances for a few hours.

Sir G.—A few hours!

Lady F.—Oh, yes! I am going to an exhibition, and an auction, and the Park, and Kensington, and a thousand places: It is quite ridiculous, I find, for married people to be always together. We shall be laughed at.

Sir G.—I am astonished! Mrs. Rackett, what does the dear creature mean?

Mrs. R.—Mean, Sir George!—what she says, I imagine.

Miss O.—Why, you know, sir, as Lady Frances had the misfortune to be bred entirely in the country, she cannot be supposed to be versed in fashionable life.

Sir G.—No; heaven forbid she should! If she had, madam, she would never have been my wife.

Mrs. R.—Are you serious?

Sir G.—Perfectly so. I should never have had the courage to marry a well-bred, fine lady.

Miss O.—Pray, sir, what do you take a fine lady to be, that you express such fear of her? (Sneeringly.)

Sir G.—A being easily described, madam, as she is seen everywhere but in her own house. She sleeps at home, but she lives all over the town. In her mind every sentiment gives place to the lust of conquest and the vanity of being particular. The feelings of wife and mother are lost in the whirl of dissipation. If she continues virtuous, 'tis by chance; and if she preserves her husband from ruin, 'tis by her dexterity at the card table! Such a woman I take to be a perfect fine lady.

Mrs. R.—And you I take to be a slanderous cynic of two-and-thirty. Twenty years hence, one might have forgiven such a libel! Now, sir, hear my definition of a fine lady: She is a creature for whom nature has done much, and education more; she has taste, elegance, spirit, understanding. In her manner she is free, in her morals nice. Her behavior is undistinguishingly polite to her husband and all mankind; her sentiments are for their hours of retirement. In a word, a fine lady is the life of conversation, the spirit of society, the joy of the public!

Pleasure follows wherever she appears, and the kindest wishes attend her slumbers. Make haste, then, my dear Lady Frances, commence fine lady, and force your husband to acknowledge the justness of my picture.

Lady F.—I am sure 'tis a delightful one. How can you (looks at him) dislike it, Sir George? You painted fashionable life in colors so disgusting that I thought I hated it; but, on a nearer view, it seems charming. I have hitherto lived in obscurity; 'tis time that I should be a woman of the world. I long to begin—my heart pants with expectation and delight!

Mrs. R.—Come, then, let us begin directly. I am impatient to introduce you to that society which you were born to ornament and charm.

Lady F.—(To Sir George.) Adieu, my love! We shall meet again at dinner.

Sir G.—Sure I am in a dream—Fanny!

Lady F.—(Returning.) Sir George!

Sir G.—Will you go without me?

Mrs. R.—Will you go without me! Ha, ha, ha! what a pathetic address! Why, sure you would not always be seen side by side, like two beans upon a stalk. Are you afraid to trust Lady Frances with me, sir?

Sir G.—Heaven and earth! with whom can a man trust his wife, in the present state of society? Formerly there were distinctions of character amongst ye; every class of females had its particular description; grandmothers were pious, aunts discreet, old maids censorious; but now aunts, grandmothers, girls and maiden gentlewomen are all the same creature—a wrinkle more or less is the sole difference between ye.

Mrs. R.—That maiden gentlewomen have lost their censoriousness is surely not in your catalogue of grievances?

Sir G.—Indeed it is—and ranked among the most serious grievances. Things went well, madam, when the tongues of three or four old virgins kept all the wives and daughters of a parish in awe. They were the dragons that guarded the Hesperian fruit; and I wonder they have not been obliged by act of parliament to resume their function.

Mrs. R.—Ha, ha, ha! and pensioned, I suppose, for making strict inquiries into the lives and conversations of their neighbors?

Sir G.—With all my heart; and empowered to oblige every woman to conform her conduct to her real situation. You, for instance, are a widow; your air should be sedate, your dress grave, your deportment matronly, and in all things an example to the young women growing up about you! Instead of which, you are dressed for conquest; think of nothing but ensnaring hearts; are a coquette, a wit and a fine lady.

Mrs. R.—Bear witness to what he says! A coquette, a wit and a fine lady! Who would have expected a eulogy from such an ill-natured mortal? Valor to a soldier, wisdom to a judge, or glory to a prince, is not more than such a character to a woman.

Miss O.—Sir George, I see, languishes for the charming society of a century and a half ago, when a grave squire, and a still graver dame, surrounded by a sober family, formed a stiff group, in a mouldy old house in the corner of a park.

Mrs. R.—Delightful serenity! Undisturbed by any noise but the cawing of rooks and the quarterly rumbling of an old family coach on a state visit, with the happy intervention of a friendly call from the parish apothecary or the curate's wife.

Sir G.—And what is the society of which you boast? A mere chaos, in which all distinction of rank is lost in a ridiculous affectation of ease. In the same select party you will often find the wife of a bishop and a sharper, of an earl and a fiddler. In short, 'tis one universal masquerade, all disguised in the same habits and manners.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—Mr. Flutter.

Sir G.—Here comes an illustration. Now, I defy you to tell, from his appearance, whether Flutter is a privy counselor, or a mercer, a lawyer or a grocer's 'prentice.

Enter Flutter.

Flutter.—Oh, just which you please, Sir George, so you don't make me a lord mayor. Ah, Mrs. Rackett! Lady Fran-

ces, your most obedient; you look—now, hang me if that's not provoking; had your gown been of another color, I should have said the prettiest thing you ever heard in your life.

Miss O.—Pray give it us.

Flut.—I was yesterday at Mrs. Bloomer's. She was dressed all in green; no other color to be seen but that of her face and bosom. "So," says I, "my dear Mrs. Bloomer, you look a carnation just bursting from its pod." Wasn't that pretty?

Sir G.—And what said her husband?

Flut.—Her husband! why her husband laughed, and said a cucumber would have been a better simile.

Sir G.—But there are husbands, sir, who would rather have corrected than amended your comparison; I, for instance, should consider a man's complimenting my wife as an impertinence.

Flut.—Why, what harm can there be in compliments? Sure they are not infectious; and if they were, you, Sir George, of all people breathing, have reason to be satisfied about your lady's attachment; everybody talks of it: that little bird, there, that she killed out of jealousy—the most extraordinary instance of affection that ever was given.

Lady F.—I kill a bird through jealousy! Heavens! Mr. Flutter, how can you impute such a cruelty to me?

Sir G.—I could have forgiven you if you had.

Flut.—Oh, what a blundering fool! No, no—now I remember—'twas your bird, Lady Frances—that's it, your bullfinch, which Sir George, in one of the refinements of his passion, sent into the wide world to seek its fortune; he took it for a knight in disguise.

Lady F.—Is it possible? Oh, Sir George! could I have imagined it was you who deprived me of a creature I was so fond of?

Sir G.—Mr. Flutter (Flutter crosses to Sir George), you are one of those busy, idle, meddling people who, from mere vacuity of mind, are the most dangerous inmates in a family. You have neither feelings nor opinions of your own, but like a glass in a tavern, bear about those of every blockhead who gives you his, and because you mean no harm, think yourself

excused, though broken friendships, discords and murders are the consequences of your indiscretions.

Flut.—(Taking out his tablets.) Vacuity of mind! What was next? I'll write down this sermon; 'tis the first I have heard since my grandmother's funeral. (Goes up, writing.)

Miss O.—Come, Lady Frances, you see what a cruel creature your loving husband can be: so let us leave him.

Sir G.—Madam, Lady Frances shall not go.

Lady F.—Shall not, Sir George? This is the first time such an expression— (Weeping.)

Sir G.—My love! my life!

Lady F.—Don't imagine I'll be treated like a child!—denied what I wish, and then pacified with sweet words.

Miss O.—(Apart.) The bullfinch! that's an excellent subject; never let it down.

Lady F.—I see plainly you would deprive me of every pleasure, as well as of my sweet bird—out of pure love! Barbarous man!

Sir G.—'Tis well, madam; your resentment of that circumstance proves to me, what I did not before suspect, that you are deficient both in tenderness and understanding. Tremble to think the hour approaches in which you would give worlds for such a proof of my love. Go, madam; give yourself to the public; abandon your heart to dissipation, and see if, in the scenes of gayety and folly that await you, you can find a recompense for the lost affection of a doting husband.

Flut.—Lord, what a fine thing it is to have the gift of speech! I suppose Sir George practises at Coachmakers' Hall, or the Black Horse in Bond street.

Lady F.—He is really angry; I cannot go.

Mrs. R.—Not go! foolish creature! you are arrived at the moment which, some time or other, was sure to happen, and everything depends on the use you make of it.

Miss O.—Come, Lady Frances, don't hesitate; the minutes are precious.

Lady F.—I could find it in my heart—and yet I won't give up, neither. If I should in this instance, he'll expect it forever.

(Exit with Mrs. Rackett.)

Miss O.—Now you act like a woman of spirit. (Exit.)

Flut.—A fair tug, by Jupiter, between duty and pleasure! Pleasure beats, and off we go. Io triumphe! (Exit.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

Same as Scene III. Act I.

Enter *Mrs. Rackett* and *Letitia*.

Mrs. Rackett.—Come, prepare, prepare—your lover is coming.

Letitia.—My lover! confess now that my absence at dinner was a severe mortification to him.

Mrs. R.—I can't absolutely swear it spoiled his appetite; he ate as if he was hungry and drank his wine as though he liked it.

Let.—What was the apology?

Mrs. R.—That you were ill; but I gave him a hint that your extreme bashfulness could not support his eye.

Let.—If I comprehend him, awkwardness and bashfulness are the last faults he can pardon in a woman; so expect to see me transformed into the veriest maukin.

Mrs. R.—You persevere, then?

Let.—Certainly. I know the design is a rash one, and the event important; it either makes *Doricourt* mine by the tenderest ties of passion or deprives me of him forever; and never to be his wife will afflict me less than to be his wife and not be beloved.

Mrs. R.—So you won't trust to the good old maxim, "Marry first and love will follow?"

Let.—As readily as I would venture my last guinea that good fortune might follow. The woman that has not touched the heart of a man before he leads her to the altar has scarcely a chance to charm it when possession and security turn their powerful arms against her.

Doricourt.—(Without.) Up stairs, hey?

Let.—But here he comes. I'll disappear for a moment. Don't spare me. (Exit.)

Enter Doricourt, not seeing Mrs. Rackett.

Doric.—So! (Looking at a picture.) This is my mistress, I presume. Ma foi! the painter has hit her off. The down-cast eye—the blushing cheek—timid—apprehensive—bashful. A tear and a prayer-book would have made her La Bella Magdalena—

Give me a woman in whose touching mien
A mind, a soul, a polished art is seen;
Whose motion speaks, whose poignant air can move;
Such are the darts to wound with endless love.

Mrs. R.—Is that an impromptu? (Touching him on the shoulder with her fan.)

Doric.—(Starting.) Madam! (Aside.) Finely caught! Not absolutely—it struck me, during the dessert, as a motto for your picture.

Mrs. R.—Gallantly turned! I perceive, however, Miss Hardy's charms have made no violent impression on you. And who can wonder?—the poor girl's defects are so obvious.

Doric.—Defects!

Mrs. R.—Merely those of education. Her father's indulgence ruined her. Mauvaise honte—conceit and ignorance all unite in the lady you are to marry.

Doric.—Marry! I marry such a woman! Your picture, I hope, is overcharged. I marry mauvaise honte—pertness and ignorance!

Mrs. R.—Thank your stars that ugliness and ill temper are not added to the list. You must think her handsome.

Doric.—Half her personal beauty would content me; but could the Medicean Venus be animated for me, and endowed with a vulgar soul, I should become the statue, and my heart transformed to marble.

Mrs. R.—Bless us! We are in a hopeful way, then!

Doric.—There must be some envy in this. (Aside.) I see she is a coquette. Ha, ha, ha! and you imagine I am persuaded of the truth of your character! ha, ha, ha! Miss Hardy, I have been assured, madam, is elegant and accomplished—but one must allow for a lady's painting. (Bows.)

Mrs. R.—(Aside.) I'll be even with him for that. Ha, ha, ha! and so you have found me out? Well, I protest I meant no harm; 'twas only to increase the éclat of her appearance that I threw a veil over her charms. Here comes the lady; her elegance and accomplishments will announce themselves.

Enter Letitia, running.

Letitia.—La, cousin, do you know that our John—— O dear heart! I didn't see you, sir. (Hanging down her head and dropping behind Mrs. Rackett.)

Mrs. R.—Fie, Letitia—Mr. Doricourt thinks you a woman of elegant manners. Stand forward and confirm his opinion.

Let.—No, no; keep before me. He's my sweetheart, and 'tis impudent to look one's sweetheart in the face, you know.

Mrs. R.—You'll allow in future for a lady's painting, sir—ha, ha, ha!

Doric.—I am astonished.

Let.—Well, hang it, I'll take heart. Why, he is but a man, you know, cousin—and I'll let him see I wasn't born in a wood to be scared by an owl. (Half apart; advances and looks at him through her fingers; makes a very stiff, formal courtesy; he bows.) You have been a great traveller, sir, I hear. I wish you'd tell us about the fine sights you saw when you went over sea. I have read in a book that there are some other countries, where the men and women are all horses. Did you see any of them?

Mrs. R.—Mr. Doricourt is not prepared, my dear, for these inquiries—he is reflecting on the importance of the question and will answer you—when he can.

Let.—When he can! Why, he's as slow in speech as aunt Margery when's she's reading Thomas Aquinas—and stands gaping like mumchance.

Mrs. R.—Have a little discretion.

Let.—Hold your tongue! Sure, I may say what I please before I am married, if I can't afterward. D'ye think a body does not know how to talk to a sweetheart? He is not the first I have had.

Doric.—Indeed!

Let.—Oh, Lud, he speaks! Why, if you must know, there was the curate at home. When papa was a hunting, he used to come a suitoring and make speeches to me out of books. Nobody knows what a mort of fine things he used to say to me—and call me Venis, and Jubah, and Dinah.

Doric.—And, pray, fair lady, how did you answer him?

Let.—Why, I used to say, "Look you, Mr. Curate, don't think to come over me with your flimflams, for a better man than ever trod in your shoes is coming over sea to marry me." But 'ifags, I begin to think I was out. Parson Dobbins was the sprightfuler man of the two.

Doric.—Surely, this cannot be Miss Hardy?

Let.—Laws, why, don't you know me? You saw me to-day—but I was daunted before my father, and the lawyer, and all them, and did not care to speak out—so maybe you thought I couldn't. But I can talk as fast as anybody when I knows folks a little. And, now I have shown my parts, I hope you'll like me better.

Enter Hardy.

Hardy.—I foresee this won't do. Mr. Doricourt, maybe you take my daughter for a fool, but you are mistaken; she's as sensible a girl as any in England.

Doric.—I am convinced she has a very uncommon understanding, sir. (*Aside.*) I did not think he had been such an ass!

Let.—(*Aside.*) My father will undo the whole. Laws, papa, how can you think he can take me for a fool, when everybody knows I beat the 'pothecary at conundrums last Christmastime? And didn't I make a string of names, all in riddles, for the Lady's Diary? There was a little river and a great house; that was Newcastle. There was what a lamb says and three letters; that was ba and k-e-r, ker, baker. There was—

Har.—Don't stand ba-a-ing there—you'll make me mad in a moment. I tell you, sir, that for all that she's devilish sensible.

Doric.—Sir, I give all possible credit to your assertions.

Let.—Laws, papa, do come along. If you stand watching, how can my sweetheart break his mind and tell me how he admires me?

Doric.—That would be difficult, indeed, madam.

Har.—I tell you, Letty, I'll have no more of this. I see well enough—

Let.—Laws, don't snub me before my husband—that is to be. You'll teach him to snub me, too—and I believe by his looks he'd like to begin now. So let us go. (Hardy pulls her.) Cousin, you may tell the gentleman what a genus I have— (Hardy pulls her again.) How I can cut watch papers and work catgut— (Pulls her again.) Make quadrille baskets with pins and take profiles in shade— (Pushes Hardy off; he returns and urges her to go.) Ay, as well as the lady at No. 62 South Moulton street, Grosvenor Square.
(Exeunt Hardy and Letitia.)

Mrs. R.—What think you of my painting now?

Doric.—Oh, mere water colors, madam. The lady has caricatured your picture.

Mrs. R.—And how does she strike you on the whole?

Doric.—Like a good design spoiled by the incapacity of the artist. Her faults are evidently the result of her father's weak indulgence. I observed an expression in her eye that seemed to satirize the folly of her lips.

Mrs. R.—But at her age, when education is fixed and manner becomes nature, hopes of improvement—

Doric.—Would be absurd. Besides, I can't turn school-master. Doricourt's wife must be incapable of improvement—but it must be because she's got beyond it.

Mrs. R.—I am pleased your misfortune sits no heavier.

Doric.—Your pardon, madam. So mercurial was the hour in which I was born that misfortunes always go plump to the bottom of my heart, like a pebble in water, and leave the surface unruffled. I shall certainly set off for Bath or the other world to-night—but whether I shall use a chaise with four swift coursers or go off in a tangent from the aperture of a pistol deserves consideration—so I make my adieus.

(Going.)

Mrs. R.—Oh, but I entreat you, postpone your journey till to-morrow. Determine on which you will, you must be this night at the masquerade.

Doric.—Masquerade!

Mrs. R.—Why not? If you resolve to visit the other world, you may as well take one night's pleasure first in this, you know.

Doric.—Faith, that's very true; ladies are the best philosophers, after all. Expect me at the masquerade. (Exit.)

Mrs. R.—He's a charming fellow. I think Letitia shan't have him. (Going.)

Enter Hardy

Hardy.—What's, he gone?

Mrs. R.—Yes; and I am glad he is. You would have ruined us! Now I beg, Mr. Hardy, you won't interfere in this business; it is a little out of your way. (Exit.)

Har.—Hang me if I don't, though. I foresee very clearly what will be the end of it if I leave you to yourselves; so I'll e'en follow him to the masquerade and tell him all about it. Let me see—what shall my dress be? A great mogul? No. A grenadier? No—no—that, I foresee, would make a laugh. Hang me if I don't send to my favorite little Quick, and borrow his Jew Isaac's dress—I know the dog likes a glass of good wine, so I'll give him a bottle of my forty-eight, and he shall teach me. Ay, that's it—I'll be cunning little Isaac. If they complain of my want of wit, I'll tell them the cursed duenna wears the breeches and has spoiled my parts. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Chamber at Courtall's.

Enter Courtall and Saville.

Courtall.—You shan't go yet—another bottle.

Saville.—Thy skull, Courtall, is a lady's thimble; no, an egg-shell.

Court.—Nay, then you are gone, too; you never aspire to similes but in your cups.

Sav.—No, no; I am steady enough—but the fumes of the wine pass directly through thy egg-shell, and leave thy brain as cool as— Hey! I am quite sober; my similes fail me.

Court.—Then we'll sit down here and have one sober bottle.

Enter Dick.

Bring a bottle and glasses.

Sav.—I'll not swallow another drop; no, though the juice should be the true Falernian.

Court.—By the bright eyes of her you love, you shall drink her health.

Sav.—Ah! (Sitting down.) She I loved is gone. (Sighing.) She's married!

Court.—Then bless your stars you are not her husband! I would be husband to no woman in Europe who was not devilish rich and devilish ugly.

Sav.—Wherefore ugly?

Court.—Because she could not have the conscience to exact those attentions that a pretty wife expects; or if she should, her resentments would be perfectly easy to me; nobody would undertake to revenge her cause.

Sav.—Thou art a most licentious fellow.

Court.—I should hate my own wife, that's certain; but I have a warm heart for those of other people; and so here's to the prettiest wife in England—Lady Frances Touchwood.

Sav.—Lady Frances Touchwood! I rise to drink her. (Rises and drinks.) How the devil came Lady Frances in your head? I never knew you give a woman of chastity before.

(Sits.)

Court.—That's odd, for you have heard me give half the women of fashion in England. But pray, now, what do you take a woman of chastity to be? (Sneeringly.)

Sav.—Such a woman as Lady Frances Touchwood, sir.

Court.—Oh, you are grave, sir; I remember you were an adorer of hers. Why didn't you marry her?

Sav.—I had not the arrogance to look so high. Had my fortune been worthy of her, she should not have been ignorant of my admiration.

Court.—Precious fellow! What! I suppose you would not dare tell her now that you admire her?

Sav.—No, nor you.

Court.—By the Lord, I have told her so.

Sav.—Have? Impossible!

Court.—Ha, ha, ha! Is it so?

Sav.—How did she receive the declaration?

Court.—Why, in the old way: blushed and frowned, and said she was married.

Sav.—What amazing things thou art capable of! I could more easily have taken the pope by the beard than profaned her ears with such a declaration.

Court.—I shall meet her at Lady Brilliant's to-night, where I shall repeat it; and I'd lay my life, under a mask she'll hear it all without a blush or frown.

Sav.—(Rising.) 'Tis false, sir! She won't.

Court.—She will! (Rising.) Nay, I'll venture to lay a round sum that I prevail on her to go out with me—only to taste the fresh air, I mean.

Sav.—Preposterous vanity! From this moment I suspect that half the victories you have boasted are as false and slanderous as your pretended influence with Lady Frances.

Court.—Pretended! How should such a fellow as you, now, who never soared beyond a cherry-cheeked daughter of a ploughman in Norfolk, judge of the influence of a man of my figure and habits? I could show thee a list in which there are names to shake thy faith in the whole sex; and to that list I have no doubt of adding the name of Lady——

Sav.—Hold, sir! My ears cannot bear the profanation; you cannot—dare not approach her! For your soul you dare not mention love to her! Her look would freeze the word whilst it hovered on thy licentious lips.

Court.—Whew! whew! Well, we shall see; this evening, by Jupiter, the trial shall be made. If I fail—I fail.

Sav.—I think thou dar'st not! But my life, my honor, on her purity.
(Exit.)

Court.—Hot-headed fool! But since he has brought it to this point, by gad I'll try what can be done with her ladyship. (Musing. Rings bell.) She's frostwork, and the prejudices of education yet strong: ergo, passionate professions will only inflame her pride and put her on her guard. For other arts, then!

Reënter Dick.

Dick, do you know any of the servants at Sir George Touchwood's?

Dick.—Yes, sir, I knows the groom and one of the housemaids: for the matter o' that, she's my own cousin, and it was my mother that helped her to the place.

Court.—Do you know Lady Frances' maid?

Dick.—I can't say as how I know she.

Court.—Do you know Sir George's valet?

Dick.—No, sir; but Sally is very thick with Mr. Gibson, Sir George's gentleman.

Court.—Then go there directly and employ Sally to discover whether her master goes to Lady Brilliant's this evening; and if he does, the name of the shop that sold his habit.

Dick.—Yes, sir.

Court.—Be exact in your intelligence, and come to me at Boodle's. (Exit Dick.) If I cannot otherwise succeed, I'll beguile her, as Jove did Alcmena, in the shape of her husband. The possession of so fine a woman, the triumph over Saville, are each a sufficient motive; and united they shall be irresistible.
(Exit.)

SCENE III.

The street.

Enter Saville.

Saville.—The air has recovered me! What have I been doing? Perhaps my petulance may be the cause of her ruin whose honor I asserted: his vanity is piqued; and where women are concerned, Courtall can be a villain.

Enter Dick.

Ha! That's his servant! Dick!

Dick.—Sir!

Sav.—Where are you going, Dick?

Dick.—Going! I am going, sir, where my master sent me.

Sav.—Well answered; but I have a particular reason for my inquiry, and you must tell me.

Dick.—Why, then, sir, I am going to call upon a cousin of mine that lives at Sir George Touchwood's.

Sav.—Very well. There (gives him money), you must make your cousin drink my health. What are you going about?

Dick.—Why, sir, I believe 'tis no harm, or elseways I am sure I would not blab. I am only going to ax if Sir George goes to the masquerade to-night, and what dress he wears.

Sav.—Enough! Now, Dick, if you will call at my lodgings on your way back, and acquaint me with your cousin's intelligence, I'll double the trifle I have given you.

Dick.—Bless your honor, I'll call—never fear. (Exit.)

Sav.—Surely the occasion may justify the means: 'tis doubly my duty to be Lady Frances' protector. Courtall, I see, is planning an artful scheme; but Saville shall outplot him.

(Exit.)

SCENE IV.

Apartment at Sir George Touchwood's.

Enter Sir George and Villers.

Villers.—For shame, Sir George; you have left Lady Frances in tears. How can you afflict her?

Sir George.—'Tis I that am afflicted—my dream of happiness is over. Lady Frances and I are disunited.

Vil.—The devil! Why, you have been in town but ten days; she can have made no acquaintance for a commons affair yet.

Sir G.—Pho! 'tis our minds that are disunited. She no longer places her whole delight in me; she has yielded herself up to the world!

Vil.—Yielded herself up to the world! Why did you not bring her to town in a cage? Then she might have taken a peep at the world! But, after all, what has the world done? A twelvemonth since, you were the gayest fellow in it. If anybody asked, Who dresses best?—Sir George Touchwood. Who is the most gallant man?—Sir George Touchwood. Who is the most wedded to amusement and dissipation?—Sir George Touchwood. And now Sir George is metamorphosed into a sour censor, and talks of fashionable life with as much bitterness as the old crabbed fellow in Rome.

Sir G.—The moment I became possessed of such a jewel as Lady Frances, everything wore a different complexion. That society in which I lived with so much *éclat*, became the object of my terror, and I think of the manners of polite life as I do of the atmosphere of a pest-house. My wife is already infected. She was set upon this morning by maids, widows and bachelors, who carried her off in triumph in spite of my displeasure.

Vil.—Ay, to be sure; there would have been no triumph in the case if you had not opposed it; but I have heard the whole story from Mrs. Rackett; and I assure you, Lady Frances didn't enjoy the morning at all: she wished for you fifty times.

Sir G.—Indeed! Are you sure of that?

Vil.—Perfectly sure.

Sir G.—I wish I had known it; my uneasiness at dinner was occasioned by very different ideas.

Vil.—Here, then, she comes to receive your apology; but if she is true woman, her displeasure will rise in proportion to your contrition; and till you grow careless about her pardon she won't grant it. However, I'll leave you. Matrimonial duties are seldom set in the style I like. (Exit Villers.)

Enter Lady Frances.

Sir G.—The sweet sorrow that glitters in these eyes I cannot bear. (Embracing her.) Look cheerfully, you rogue.

Lady Frances.—I cannot look otherwise if you are pleased with me.

Sir G.—Well, Fanny, to-day you made your *entrée* in the fashionable world; tell me honestly the impressions you received.

Lady F.—Indeed, Sir George, I was so hurried from place to place that I had not time to find out what my impressions were.

Sir G.—That's the very spirit of the life you have chosen.

Lady F.—Everybody about me seemed happy; but everybody seemed in a hurry to be happy somewhere else.

Sir G.—And you like this?

Lady F.—One must like what the rest of the world likes.

Sir G.—Pernicious maxim!

Lady F.—But, my dear Sir George, you have not promised to go with me to the masquerade.

Sir G.—'Twould be a shocking indecorum to be seen together, you know.

Lady F.—Oh, no; I asked Mrs. Rackett and she told me we might be seen together at the masquerade—without being laughed at.

Sir G.—Really?

Lady F.—Indeed, to tell you the truth, I could wish it was the fashion for married people to be inseparable; for I have more heartfelt satisfaction in fifteen minutes with you at my side than fifteen days of amusement could give me without you.

Sir G.—My sweet creature! How that confession charms me! Let us begin the fashion.

Lady F.—Oh, impossible! We should not gain a single proselyte; and you can't conceive what spiteful things would be said of us. At Kensington, to-day, a lady met us, whom we saw at court when we were presented. She lifted up her hands in amazement! "Bless me!" said she to her companion, "here's Lady Frances without Sir Hurlo Thrumbo! My dear Mrs. Rackett, consider what an important charge you have! For heaven's sake take her home again or some enchanter on a flying dragon will descend and carry her off." "Oh," said another, "I dare say Lady Frances has a clew at her heel, like the peerless Rosamond; her tender swain would never have trusted her so far without such a precaution."

Sir G.—Heaven and earth! How shall innocence preserve its lustre amidst manners so corrupt? My dear Fanny, I feel

a sentiment for thee at this moment tenderer than love—more animated than passion. I could weep over that purity, exposed to the sullyng breath of fashion, in whose latitudinary vortex chastity herself can scarcely move unspotted.

Enter Gibson.

Gibson.—Your honor talked, I thought, something about going to the masquerade?

Sir G.—Well.

Gib.—Hasn't your honor—— I thought your honor had forgot to order a dress.

Lady F.—Well considered, Gibson. Come, will you be Jew, Turk or heretic, Chinese emperor or a ballad singer, a rake or a watchman?

Sir G.—Oh, neither, my love I can't take the trouble to support a character.

Lady F.—You'll wear a domino, then. I saw a pink domino, trimmed with blue, at the shop where I bought my habit. Would you like it?

Sir G.—Anything—anything.

Lady F.—Then go about it directly, Gibson. (Exit Gibson.) A pink domino, trimmed with blue, and a hat of the same. Come, you have not seen my dress yet—it is most beautiful; I long to have it on.

(Exeunt Sir George and Lady Frances.)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A grand masquerade. Music. A party of sixteen discovered dancing cotillions in front and rear; chandeliers down; other characters pass and repass.

Enter Hardy in the dress of Isaac Mendoza. Music ceases.

Hardy.—Why, isn't it a shame to see so many stout, well-built young fellows masquerading and cutting Couranta's here at home, instead of making the French cut capers to the tune

of your cannon or sweating the Spaniards with an English fandango? I foresee the end of all this.

Saville.—(Masked.) Why, thou little testy Israelite! back to Duke's Place, and preach your tribe into a subscription for the good of the land on whose milk and honey ye fatten. Where are your Joshuas and your Gideons, ay? What! all dwindled into stockbrokers, peddlers and ragmen?

Har.—No, not all. Some of us turn Christians, and by degrees grow into all the privileges of Englishmen! In the second generation we are patriots, rebels, courtiers and husbands.

Villers.—(Masked.) What! my little Isaac! How the devil came you here? Where's your old Margaret?

Har.—Oh, I have got rid of her.

Vil.—How?

Har.—Why, I persuaded a young Irishman that she was a blooming plump beauty of eighteen; so they made an elopement, ha, ha, ha! and she is now the toast of Tipperary. (Aside.) Ha! there's cousin Rackett and her party; they shan't know me. (Puts on his mask. Music.)

Enter Folly, on a hobby horse, with cap and bells.

Vil.—Hey! Tom fool! what business have you here?

Folly.—What, sir! affront a prince in his own dominion!

(Struts off.)

Enter Mrs. Rackett, Lady Frances, Sir George and Flutter.

Mrs. Rackett.—Look at this dumpling Jew; he must be a Levite by his figure. You have surely practised the flesh hook a long time, friend, to have raised that goodly presence.

Har.—About as long, my brisk widow, as you have been angling for a second husband; but my hook has been better baited than yours. You have only caught gudgeons, I see.

(Pointing to Flutter.)

Flutter.—Oh, this is one of the genuses they hire to entertain the company with their accidental sallies. Let me look at your commonplace book, friend; I want a few good things.

Har.—I'd oblige you, with all my heart, but you'll spoil them in repeating—or, if you should not, they'll gain you no reputation—for nobody will believe they are your own.

Sir George.—He knows ye, Flutter! the little gentleman fancies himself a wit, I see.

Har.—There's no depending on what you see—the eyes of the jealous are not to be trusted. Look to your lady.

Flut.—He knows ye, Sir George.

Sir G.—(Aside.) What! am I the town talk?

Har.—(Aside.) I can neither see Doricourt nor Letty. I must find them out. (Exit Hardy.)

Mrs. R.—Well, Lady Frances, is not all this charming? Could you have conceived such a brilliant assemblage of objects?

Lady Frances.—Delightful! The days of enchantment are restored; the columns glow with sapphires and rubies; emperors and fairies, beauties and dwarfs meet me at every step.

Sir G.—How lively are first impressions on sensitive minds! In four hours vapidty and languor will take place of that exquisite sense of joy which flutters your little heart. (To Lady Frances.)

Mrs. R.—What an inhuman creature! Fate has not allowed us these sensations above ten times in our lives, and would you have us shorten them by anticipation?

(Sir George and Mrs. Rackett talk apart.)

Flut.—Oh, Lord! your wise men are the greatest fools upon earth; they reason about their enjoyments and analyze their pleasures, whilst the essence escapes. Look, Lady Frances! D'ye see that figure strutting in the dress of an emperor? His father retails oranges in Botolph Lane. That gypsy is a maid or honor and that ragman a physician.

Lady F.—Why, you know everybody!

Flut.—Oh, every creature. A mask is nothing at all to me. I can give you the history of half the people here. In the next apartment there is a whole family who, to my knowledge, have lived on watercress this month to make a figure here to-night; but, to make up for that, they'll cram their pockets with cold ducks and chickens for a carnival to-morrow.

Lady F.—Oh, I should like to see this provident family.

Flut.—Honor me with your arm.

(*Exeunt Flutter and Lady Frances. Mrs. Rackett advances.*)

Mrs. R.—Come, Sir George, you shall be my beau. We'll make the tour of the rooms and meet them. Oh, your pardon, you must follow Lady Frances, or the wit and fine parts of Mr. Flutter may drive you out her head. Ha, ha, ha! (*Exit.*)

Sir G.—I was going to follow her, and now I dare not. How can I be such a fool as to be governed by the fear of that ridicule which I despise? (*Exit.*)

Enter Doricourt, meeting a Mask dressed as a pilgrim.

Doricourt.—Ha! my lord; I thought you had been engaged at Westminster on this important night.

Mask.—So I am—I slipped out as soon as Lord Trope got upon his legs; I can badiner here an hour or two and be back again before he is down. There's a fine figure! I'll address her.

Enter Letitia.

Charity, fair lady! Charity for a poor pilgrim.

Letitia.—Charity! If you mean my prayers, heaven grant thee wit, pilgrim.

Mask.—That blessing would do from a devotee; from you I ask other charities; such charities as beauty should bestow—soft looks—sweet words—and kind wishes.

Let.—Alas! I am bankrupt of these and forced to turn beggar myself. (*Aside.*) There he is! how shall I catch his attention?

Mask.—Will you grant me no favor?

Let.—Yes, one—I'll make you my partner—not for life, but through the soft mazes of a minuet. Dare you dance?

Doric.—Some spirit in that!

Mask.—I dare do anything you command. That lady is against my vow—but here comes a man of the world.

Doric.—Do you know her, my lord?

Mask.—No. Such a woman as that would formerly have been known in any disguise; but beauty is now common. Venus seems to have given her cestus to the whole sex. (Music. A minuet.)

Doric.—(During the minuet.) She dances divinely. (When ended, exit Letitia.) Somebody must know her! Let us inquire who she is. (Music. Exit Doricourt.)

Enter Saville and Kitty Willis, habited like Lady Frances.
Music ceases.

Saville.—I have seen Courtall in Sir George's habit, though he endeavored to keep himself concealed. Go and seat yourself in the tea-room, and on no account discover your face; remember, too, Kitty, that the woman you are to personate is a woman of virtue.

Kitty.—I am afraid I shall find that a difficult character; indeed, I believe it is seldom kept up through a whole masquerade.

Sav.—Of that you can be no judge. Follow my directions, and you shall be rewarded. (Exit Kitty.)

Enter Doricourt.

Doricourt.—Ha! Saville! Did you see a lady dance just now?

Sav.—No.

Doric.—Very odd. Nobody knows her.

Sav.—Where is Miss Hardy?

Doric.—Cutting watch-papers and making conundrums, I suppose.

Sav.—What do you mean?

Doric.—Faith, I hardly know. She's not here, however, Mrs. Rackett tells me. I asked no further.

Sav.—Your indifference seems increased.

Doric.—Quite the reverse; 'tis advanced thirty-two degrees toward hatred.

Sav.—You are jesting!

Doric.—Then it must be with a very ill grace, my dear Saville, for I never felt so seriously. Do you know the creature's almost an idiot?

Sav.—What!

Doric.—An idiot. What the devil shall I do with her? Egad! I think I'll feign myself mad—and then Hardy will propose to cancel the engagements.

Sav.—An excellent expedient. I must leave you; you are mysterious, and I can't stay to unravel ye. I came here to watch over innocence and beauty.

Doric.—The guardian of innocence and beauty at three-and-twenty! Is there not a cloven foot under that black gown, Saville?

Sav.—No, faith; Courtall is here on a most detestable design. I found means to get a knowledge of the lady's dress, and have brought a girl to personate her whose reputation cannot be hurt. You shall know the result to-morrow. Adieu.

(Exit Saville.)

Doric.—(Musing.) Yes, I think that will do. I'll feign myself mad, fee the doctor to pronounce me incurable, and when the parchments are destroyed—— (Stands in a musing posture.)

Music. Enter Letitia.

Letitia.—You have chosen an odd situation for study. Fashion and taste preside in this spot; they throw their spells around you; ten thousand delights spring up at their command; and you, a stoic, a being without senses, are rapt in reflection.

Doric.—And you, the most charming being in the world, awaken me to admiration. Did you come from the stars?

Let.—Yes, and I shall reascend in a moment.

Doric.—Pray show me your face before you go.

Let.—Beware of imprudent curiosity; it lost Paradise.

Doric.—Eve's curiosity was raised by the devil; 'tis an angel tempts mine. So your allusion is not in point.

Let.—But why would you see my face?

Doric.—To fall in love with it.

Let.—And what then?

Doric.—Why, then—— (*Aside.*) Ay, curse it, there's the rub!

Let.—Your mistress will be angry; but perhaps you have no mistress?

Doric.—Yes, yes, and a sweet one it is!

Let.—What! Is she old?

Doric.—No.

Let.—Ugly?

Doric.—No.

Let.—What then?

Doric.—Pho! don't talk about her, but show me your face.

Let.—My vanity forbids it—'twould frighten you.

Doric.—Impossible! Your shape is graceful, your air bewitching, your bosom transparent, and your chin would tempt me to kiss it, if I did not see a pouting red lip above it, that demands—— (*Going to kiss.*)

Let.—You grow too free.

Doric.—Show me your face, then—only half a glance.

Let.—Not for worlds!

Doric.—What! you will have a little gentle force? (*Attempts to seize her mask.*)

Let.—I am gone forever! (*Exit.*)

Doric.—'Tis false! I'll follow to the end—— (*Exit.*)

Music. Reënter Flutter, Lady Frances Touchwood and Saville.

Lady Frances.—How can you be thus interested for a stranger?

Saville.—Goodness will have interest; its home is heaven; on earth 'tis but a wanderer. Where is your husband?

Flutter.—Why, what's that to him?

Lady F.—Surely it can't be merely his habit; there's something in him that awes me.

Flut.—Pho! 'tis only his gray beard. I know him; he keeps a lottery office on Cornhill.

Sav.—My province as an enchanter lays open every secret to me, lady! There are dangers abroad—beware! (Exit.)

Lady F.—'Tis very odd; his manner has made me tremble. Let us seek Sir George.

Flut.—He is coming toward us.

Enter Courtall, habited like Sir George Touchwood.

Courtall.—There she is! If I can but disengage her from that fool Flutter—crown me, ye schemers, with immortal wreaths.

Lady F.—Oh, my dear Sir George! I rejoice to meet you; an old conjurer has been frightening me with his prophecies. Where's Mrs. Rackett?

Court.—In the dancing-room. I promised to send you to her, Mr. Flutter.

Flut.—Ah! she wants me to dance. With all my heart.
(Exit.)

Lady F.—Why do you keep on your mask? 'Tis too warm.

Court.—'Tis very warm—I want air—let us go.

Lady F.—You seem agitated. Shan't we bid our company adieu?

Court.—No, no; there's no time for forms. I'll just give directions to the carriage, and be with you in a moment. (Going, steps back.) Put on your mask! I have a particular reason for it.
(Exit.)

Reënter Saville, with Kitty.

Saville.—Now, Kitty, you know your lesson. Lady Frances (takes off his mask), let me lead you to your husband.

Lady F.—Heavens! Is Mr. Saville the conjurer? Sir George is just stepped to the door to give directions. We are going home immediately.

Sav.—No, madam, you are deceived; Sir George is this way.

Lady F.—This is astonishing!

Sav.—Be not alarmed; you have escaped a snare, and shall be in safety in a moment. (Exeunt Saville and Lady Frances.)

Reënter Courtall, and seizes Kitty's hand.

Courtall.—Now!

Kitty.—'Tis pity to go so soon.

Court.—Perhaps I may bring you back, my angel—but go now you must.
(*Exeunt Courtall and Kitty.*)

Music. Reënter Doricourt and Letitia.

Doricourt.—By heavens! I never was charmed till now. English beauty—French vivacity—wit—elegance. Your name, my angel; tell me your name, though you persist in concealing your face.

Letitia.—My name has a spell in it.

Doric.—I thought so; it must be charming.

Let.—But if revealed, the charm is broken.

Doric.—I'll answer for its force.

Let.—Suppose it Harriet, or Charlotte, or Maria, or—

Doric.—Hang Harriet, and Charlotte, and Maria!—the name your father gave ye?

Let.—That can't be worth knowing, 'tis so transient a thing.

Doric.—How transient?

Let.—Heaven forbid my name should be lasting till I am married.

Doric.—Married! the chains of matrimony are too heavy and vulgar for such a spirit as yours. The flowery wreaths of Cupid are the only bands you should wear.

Let.—They are the lightest, I believe; but 'tis possible to wear those of marriage gracefully. Throw them loosely round, and twist them in a true lover's knot for the bosom.

Doric.—An angel! But what will you be when a wife?

Let.—A woman. If my husband should prove a churl, a fool or a tyrant, I'd break his heart, ruin his fortune, elope with the first pretty fellow that asked me, and return the contempt of the world with scorn, whilst my feelings preyed upon my life.

Doric.—Amazing! (*Aside.*) What if you loved him, and he were worthy of your love?

Let.—Why, then I'd be anything and all—grave, gay, capricious—the soul of whim, the spirit of variety—live with him in the eye of fashion or in the shade of retirement—change my country, my sex—feast with him in an Esquimaux hut or a Persian pavilion—join him in the victorious war dance on the borders of Lake Ontario, or sleep to the soft breathings of the flute in the cinnamon groves of Ceylon—dig with him in the mines of Golconda, or enter the dangerous precincts of the mogul's seraglio—cheat him of his wishes, and overturn his empire, to restore the husband of my heart to the blessings of liberty and love.

Doric.—Delightful wildness! Oh, to catch thee and hold thee forever in this little cage! (Attempting to clasp her.)

Let.—Hold, sir! Though Cupid must give the bait that tempts me to the snare, 'tis Hymen must spread the net to catch me.

Doric.—"Tis in vain to assume the airs of coldness: fate has ordained you mine.

Let.—How do you know?

Doric.—I feel it here. I never met with a woman so perfectly to my taste; and I won't believe it formed you so on purpose to tantalize me.

Let.—(Aside.) This moment is worth a whole existence!

Doric.—Come, show me your face, and rivet my chains.

Let.—To-morrow you shall be satisfied.

Doric.—To-morrow, and not to-night?

Let.—No.

Doric.—Where, then, shall I wait on you to-morrow?—where see you?

Let.—You shall see me at an hour when you least expect me.

Doric.—Why all this mystery?

Let.—I like to be mysterious. At present be content to know that I am a woman of family and fortune.

Doric.—Let me see you to your carriage.

Let.—As you value knowing me, stir not a step. If I am followed, you never see me more. Adieu. (Exit.)

Enter Hardy.

Hardy.—(Aside.) Adieu! then I'm come in at the fag end.

Doric.—Barbarous creature! she's gone! What! and is this really serious? And I in love? Pho! it can't be.

Enter Flutter.

Oh, Flutter, do you know that charming creature?

Flutter.—What charming creature? I passed a thousand.

Doric.—She went out at that door as you entered.

Flut.—Oh, yes; I know her very well.

Doric.—Do you, my dear fellow? Who—

Flut.—She's kept by Lord George Jennett.

Har.—(Aside.) Impudent scoundrel! I foresee I shall cut his throat.

Doric.—Kept!

Flut.—Yes. Colonel Gorget had her first; then Mr. Loveill; then—I forget exactly how many; and at last she's Lord George's. (Goes up and talks to other masks and goes off.)

Doric.—I'll murder Gorget, poison Lord George and shoot myself.

Har.—Now's the time, I see, to clear up the whole. Mr. Doricourt! I say Flutter was mistaken; I know who you are in love with.

Doric.—A strange rencounter! Who?

Har.—My Letty.

Doric.—Oh, I understand your rebuke! 'tis too soon, sir, to assume the father-in-law.

Har.—Zounds! What do you mean by that? I tell you that the lady you admire is Letitia Hardy.

Doric.—I am glad you are so well satisfied with the state of my heart. I wish I was! (Exit)

Har.—Stop a moment. Stop, I say! What! you won't? Very well—if I don't play you a trick for this may I never be a grandfather! I'll plot with Letty now and not against her; ay, hang me if I don't! There's something in my head that shall tingle in his heart. He shall have a lecture upon

impatience that I foresee he'll be the better for as long as he lives.

Reënter Saville, Flutter and Villers.

Saville.—Flutter, come with us; we're going to raise a laugh at Courtall's.

Flutter.—With all my heart. "Live to live" was my father's motto. "Live to laugh" is mine. (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

Courtall's.

Enter Kitty and Courtall.

Kitty.—Where have you brought me, Sir George? This is not our home!

Courtall.—"Tis my home, beautiful Lady Frances! (Kneels and takes off his mask.) Oh, forgive the ardor of my passion, which has compelled me to deceive you!

Kitty.—Mr. Courtall! what will become of me?

Court.—Oh, say but that you pardon the wretch who adores you. Did you but know the agonizing tortures of my heart, since I had the felicity of conversing with you this morning, or the despair that now—— (Knock. Courtall rises.)

Kitty.—Oh, I'm undone!

Court.—Zounds! my dear Lady Frances! I am not at home! (Calls to a servant without.) Rascal! do you hear? Let nobody in; I am not at home!

Dick.—(Without.) Sir, I told the gentleman so.

Court.—Eternal curses! they are coming up. Step into this room, adorable creature! one moment; I'll throw them out of the window if they stay three. (Exit Kitty.)

Enter Saville, Flutter and Villers.

Flutter.—O Gemini! beg the petticoat's pardon. Just saw a corner of it.

Villers.—No wonder admittance was so difficult. I thought you took us for bailiffs.

Court.—Upon my soul, I am devilish glad to see you—but you perceive how I am circumstanced. Excuse me at this moment.

Vil.—Tell us who 'tis, then.

Court.—Oh, fie!

Flut.—We won't blab.

Court.—I can't, upon honor. Thus far—shes' a woman of the first character and rank. Saville (taking him aside), have I influence or have I not?

Saville.—Why, sure, you do not insinuate——

Court.—No, not insinuate, but swear that she's now in my bed-chamber; by gad, I don't deceive you. There's generalship, you rogue! Such a humble, distant, sighing fellow as thou art, at the end of a six-months' siege, would have boasted of a kiss from her glove. I only give the signal and—pop! she's in my arms!

Sav.—What, Lady Fran——

Court.—Hush! You shall see her name to-morrow morning in red letters at the end of my list. Gentlemen, you must excuse me now. Come and drink chocolate at twelve, but——

Sav.—Ay, let us go, out of respect to the lady!—'tis a person of rank.

Flut.—Is it? Then I'll have a peep at her.

Court.—This is too much. (Trying to prevent him.)

Vil.—By Jupiter, we'll have a peep.

Court.—Gentlemen, consider—for heaven's sake—a lady of quality. What will be the consequences?

Flut.—The consequences! Why, you'll have your throat cut, that's all; but I'll write your elegy. So now for the door! (Flutter pulls Courtall away, passes him round to Villers and Saville, who hold him. Flutter opens door.) I beg your ladyship's pardon, whoever you are. (Leads her out.) Emerge from darkness, like the glorious sun, and bless the wondering circle with your charms. (Kitty Willis takes off her mask.)

Sav.—Kitty Willis! Ha, ha, ha!

Omnes.—Kitty Willis! Ha, ha, ha! Kitty Willis!

Vil.—Why, what a fellow you are, Courtall, to attempt imposing on your friends in this manner! A lady of quality!—an earl's daughter! Your ladyship's most obedient— Ha, ha, ha!

Sav.—Courtall, have you influence or have you not?

Flut.—The man's moonstruck.

Court.—Hell and ten thousand furies seize you all together.

Kitty.—(Advancing to Courtall.) What! me, too, Mr. Courtall? Me, whom you have knelt to, prayed to and adored?

Flut.—That's right, Kitty; give him a little more.

(All laugh at Courtall.)

Court.—Disappointed and laughed at!

Sav.—Laughed at and despised, I have fulfilled my design, which was to expose your villainy and laugh at your presumption. Adieu, sir. Remember how you again boast of your influence with women of reputation; and when you next want amusement, dare not to look up to the virtuous and to the noble for a companion. (Exit, leading Kitty.)

Flut.—And, Courtall, before you carry a lady into your bed-chamber again, look under her mask. D'ye hear?

(Exit, laughing.)

Court.—There's no bearing this! I'll set off for Paris directly. (Exit.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

Apartment in Hardy's house.

Enter Hardy and Villers.

Villers.—Whimsical enough! Dying for her and hates her! Believes her a fool and a woman of brilliant understanding!

Hardy.—As true as you are alive—but when I went up to him last night, at the Pantheon, out of downright good nature, to explain things, my gentleman whips round upon his heel and snapped one as short as if I had been a beggar woman with six children, and he overseer of the parish.

Vil.—Here comes the wonder worker.

Enter Letitia.

Here comes the enchantress, who can go to masquerades and sing and dance and talk a man out of his wits! But, pray, have we morning masquerades?

Letitia.—Oh, no; but I am so enamored of this all-conquering habit that I could not resist putting it on the moment I had breakfasted. I shall wear it on the day I am married and then lay it by in spices—like the miraculous robes of Saint Bridget.

Vil.—That's as most brides do. The charms that helped to catch the husband are generally laid by, one after another, till the lady grows a downright wife, and then runs crying to her mother because she has transformed her lover into a downright husband.

Har.—Listen to me. I hain't slept to-night for thinking of plots to plague Doricourt; and they drove one another out of my head so quick that I was as giddy as a goose and could make nothing of them. I wish to goodness you could contrive something.

Vil.—Contrive to plague him! Nothing so easy. Don't undeceive him, madam, till he is your husband. Marry him whilst he possesses the sentiments you labored to give him of Miss Hardy—and when you are his wife——

Let.—Oh, heavens! I see the whole—that's the very thing. My dear Mr. Villers, you are the divinest man!

Vil.—Don't make love to me, hussy.

Enter Mrs. Rackett.

Mrs. Rackett.—No, pray don't—for I design to have Villers myself in about six years. There's an oddity in him that pleases me. He holds women in contempt, and I should like to have an opportunity of breaking his heart for that.

Vil.—And when I am heartily tired of life, I know no woman whom I would with more pleasure make my executioner.

Har.—It cannot be. I foresee it will be impossible to bring it about. You know the wedding wasn't to take place this

week or more, and Letty will never be able to play the fool so long.

Vil.—The knot shall be tied to-night. I have it all here (pointing to his forehead); the license is ready. Feign yourself ill; send for Doricourt, and tell him you can't go out of the world in peace except you see the ceremony performed.

Har.—I feign myself ill! I could as soon feign myself a Roman ambassador. I was never ill in my life but with the toothache—when Letty's mother was a-breeding.

Vil.—Oh, I have no fears for you. But what says Miss Hardy? Are you willing to make the irrevocable vow before night?

Let.—Oh, heavens! I—'tis so exceeding sudden, that really—

Mrs. R.—That really she is frightened out of her wits lest it should be impossible to bring matters about. But I have taken the scheme into my protection, and you shall be Mrs. Doricourt before night. Come (to Hardy), to bed directly; your room shall be crammed with vials and all the apparatus of death; then, heigh, presto! for Doricourt.

Vil.—You go and put off your conquering dress (to Letitia), and get all your awkward airs ready. And you practise a few groans (to Hardy); and you, if possible, an air of gravity (to Mrs. Rackett). I'll answer for the plot.

Let.—Married in jest! 'Tis an odd idea! Well, I'll venture it.
(*Exeunt Letitia and Mrs. Rackett.*)

Vil.—Ay, I'll be sworn! (Looks at his watch.) 'Tis past three. The budget's to be opened this morning. I'll just step down to the house. Will you go?

Har.—What! with a mortal sickness?

Vil.—What a blockhead! If, I believe, half of us were to stay away with mortal sicknesses, it would be for the health of the nation. Good-morning. I'll call and feel your pulse as I come back.
(*Exit.*)

Har.—You won't find them over brisk, I fancy. I foresee some ill happening from this making believe die before one's time. But hang it—ahem! I am a stout man yet; only fifty-six. What's that? In the last yearly bills there were three

lived to above a hundred. Fifty-six! Fiddle-de-dee! I am not afraid, not I. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Doricourt's lodgings.

Enter Saville.

Saville.—Undressed, so late?

Doricourt.—I didn't go to bed till late; 'twas late before I went—late when I rose. Do you know Lord George Jennett?

Sav.—Yes.

Doric.—Has he a mistress?

Sav.—Yes.

Doric.—What sort of a creature is she?

Sav.—Why, she spends him three thousand a year with the ease of a duchess, and entertains his friends with the grace of a Ninon. Ergo, she is handsome, spirited and clever. (Doricourt walks about disordered.) In the name of caprice, what ails you?

Doric.—You have hit it. Elle est mon caprice. The mistress of Lord George Jennett is my caprice. Oh, insufferable!

Sav.—What! you saw her at the masquerade?

Doric.—Saw her—loved her—died for her, without knowing her; and now the curse is, I can't hate her.

Sav.—Ridiculous enough! All this distress about a kept woman, whom any man may have, I dare swear, in a fortnight. They've been jarring some time.

Doric.—Have her! The sentiment I have conceived for the witch is so unaccountable that, in that line, I cannot bear her idea. Was she a woman of honor, for a wife, I could adore her; but I really believe, if she should send me an assignation, I should hate her.

Sav.—Hey-day! This sounds like love. What becomes of poor Miss Hardy?

Doric.—Her name has given me an ague! Dear Saville, how shall I contrive to make old Hardy cancel the engage-

ments? The moiety of the estate, which he will forfeit, shall be his the next moment by deed of gift.

Sav.—Let me see. Can't you get it insinuated that you are a devilish wild fellow; that you are an infidel, and attached to wenching, gaming, and so forth?

Doric.—Ay, such a character might have done some good two centuries back. But who the devil can it frighten now? I believe it must be the mad scheme at last. There, will that do for a grin? (Affects madness.)

Sav.—Ridiculous! But how are you certain that the woman who has so bewildered you belongs to Lord George?

Doric.—Flutter told me so.

Sav.—Then fifty to one against the intelligence.

Doric.—It must be so. There was a mystery in her manner for which nothing else can account. (A violent rap.) Who can this be?

Sav.—(Looks out.) The proverb is your answer; 'tis Flutter himself. Tip him a scene of the madman, and see how it takes.

Doric.—I will; a good way to send it about town. Shall it be of the melancholy kind, or the raving?

Sav.—Rant! rant! Here he comes.

Doric.—Talk not to me, who can pull comets by the beard and overset an island.

Enter Flutter.

There! This is he! (crosses to Flutter and seizes him by the throat)—this is he who hath sent my poor soul, without coat or breeches, to be tossed about in ether like a duck-feather! Villain, give me my soul again!

Flutter.—Upon my soul, I haven't got your soul. (Doric releases him. Flutter exceedingly frightened.)

Sav.—Oh, Mr. Flutter, what a melancholy sight! I little thought to see my poor friend reduced to this.

Flut.—Mercy defend me! What! is he mad?

Sav.—You see how it is. A cursed Italian lady—jealousy—gave him a drug; and every full of the moon—

Doric.—Moon! Who dares talk of the moon? The patroness of genius—the rectifier of wits—the—oh! here she is! I feel her—she tugs at my brain—she has it—she has it—oh!

(Exit.)

Flut.—Well, this is dreadful! Exceeding dreadful, I protest. Have you had a doctor?

Sav.—Not yet. The worthy Miss Hardy—what a misfortune!

Flut.—Ay, very true. Do they know it?

Sav.—Oh, no; the paroxysm seized him but this morning.

Flut.—Adieu; I can't stay. (Going in great haste.)

Sav.—But you must stay (holding him) and assist me; perhaps he'll return again in a moment; and when he is this way his strength is prodigious.

Flut.—Can't, indeed; can't, upon my soul. (Going.)

Sav.—Flutter, don't make a mistake, now; remember 'tis Doricourt that's mad.

Flut.—Yes—you mad.

Sav.—No, no; Doricourt.

Flut.—Egad, I'll say you are both mad, and then I can't mistake.

Doric.—(Without.) Bring me a pickled elephant.

(Flutter runs off.)

SCENE III.

Sir George Touchwood's house.

Enter Sir George and Lady Frances Touchwood.

Sir George.—The bird is escaped; Courtall is gone to France.

Lady Frances.—Heaven and earth! Have you been to seek him?

Sir G.—Seek him! Ay.

Lady F.—How did you get his name? I should never have told it you.

Sir G.—I learned it in the first coffee-house I entered. Everybody is full of the story.

Lady F.—Thank heaven he's gone! But I have a story for you. The Hardy family are forming a plot upon your friend Doricourt, and we are expected in the evening to assist.

Sir G.—With all my heart, my angel; but I can't stay to hear it unfolded. They told me Mr. Saville would be at home in half an hour, and I am impatient to see him. The adventure of last night—

Lady F.—Think of it only with gratitude. The danger I was in has overset a new system of conduct, that perhaps I was too much inclined to adopt. But henceforward, my dear Sir George, you shall be my constant companion and protector. And when they ridicule the unfashionable monsters, the felicity of our hearts will make their satire pointless.

Sir G.—Charming angel! You almost reconcile me to Courtall. (Knock.) Hark! Here's company. (Going to window.) 'Tis your lively widow. I'll step down the back stairs to escape her. (Exit.)

Enter Mrs. Rackett.

Mrs. Rackett.—Oh, Lady Frances! I am shocked to death. Have you received a card from us?

Lady F.—Yes; within these twenty minutes.

Mrs. R.—Ay, 'tis of no consequence. 'Tis all over. Doricourt's mad.

Lady F.—Mad!

Mrs. R.—My poor Letitia! Just as we were enjoying ourselves with the prospect of a scheme that was planned for their mutual happiness, in came Flutter, breathless, with the intelligence. I flew here to know if you had heard it.

Lady F.—No, indeed; and I hope it is one of Mr. Flutter's dreams.

Enter Saville.

Apropos; now we shall be informed. Mr. Saville, I rejoice to see you, though Sir George will be disappointed; he's gone to your lodgings.

Saville.—I should have been happy to have prevented Sir George. I hope your ladyship's adventure last night did not disturb your dreams?

Lady F.—Not at all; for I never slept a moment. My escape, and the importance of my obligations to you, employed my thoughts. But we have just had shocking intelligence. Is it true that Doricourt is mad?

Sav.—So the business is done. (*Aside.*) Madam, I am sorry to say that I have just been a melancholy witness of his ravings; he was in the height of a paroxysm.

Mrs. R.—Oh, there can be no doubt of it! Flutter told us the whole history. Some Italian princess gave him a drug in a box of sweetmeats sent to him by her own page, and it renders him lunatic every month. Poor Miss Hardy! I never felt so much on any occasion in my life.

Sav.—To soften your concern, I will inform you, madam, that Miss Hardy is less to be pitied than you imagine.

Mrs. R.—Why so, sir?

Sav.—'Tis rather a delicate subject, but he did not love Miss Hardy.

Mrs. R.—He did love Miss Hardy, sir, and would have been the happiest of men.

Sav.—Pardon me, madam; his heart was not only free from that lady's chains, but absolutely captivated by another.

Mrs. R.—No, sir—no. It was Miss Hardy who captivated him. She met him last night at the masquerade and charmed him in disguise. He professed the most violent passion for her, and a plan was laid this evening to cheat him into happiness.

Sav.—Ha, ha, ha! Upon my soul, I must beg your pardon! I have not eaten of the Italian princess' box of sweetmeats, sent by her own page; and yet I am as mad as Doricourt. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. R.—So it appears. What can all this mean?

Sav.—Why, madam, he is at present in his perfect senses; but he'll lose them in ten minutes through joy. The madness was only a feint to avoid marrying Miss Hardy. Ha, ha, ha! I'll carry him the intelligence directly. (*Going.*)

Mrs. R.—Not for worlds. I owe him revenge now for what he has made us suffer. You must promise not to divulge a

syllable I have told you; and when Doricourt is summoned to Mr. Hardy's, prevail on him to come—madness and all.

Lady F.—Pray, do. I should like to see him showing off, now I am in the secret.

Sav.—You must be obeyed, though 'tis inhuman to conceal his happiness.

Mrs. R.—I am going home, so I'll set you down at his lodgings and acquaint you, by the way, with our whole scheme. Allons!

Sav.—I attend you.

Mrs. R.—You won't fail us?

(Exeunt Saville and Mrs. Rackett.)

Lady F.—No; depend on us.

(Exit.)

SCENE IV.

Doricourt's lodgings.

Doricourt seated, reading, on sofa.

Doricourt.—(Flings away the book.) What effect can the morals of fourscore have on a mind torn with passion? (Musing.) Is it possible such a soul as hers can support itself in so humiliating a situation? A kept woman! (Rising.) Well, well, I am glad it is so—I am glad it is so!

Enter Saville.

Saville.—What a happy dog you are, Doricourt! I might have been mad, or beggared, or pistolled myself without its being mentioned; but you, forsooth! the whole female world is concerned for. I reported the state of your brain to five different women. The lip of the first trembled; the white bosom of the second heaved a sigh; the third ejaculated and turned her eye to—the glass; the fourth blessed herself, and the fifth said, whilst she pinned a curl, "Well, now, perhaps he'll be an amusing companion; his native dullness was intolerable."

Doric.—Envy! sheer envy, by the smiles of Hebe! There are not less than forty pair of the brightest eyes in town will drop crystals when they hear of my misfortune.

Sav.—Well, but I have news for you. Poor Hardy is confined to his bed; they say he is going out of the world by the first post, and he wants to give you his blessing.

Doric.—Ill! so ill! I am sorry from my soul. He's a worthy little fellow—if he had not the gift of foreseeing so strongly.

Sav.—Well, you must go and take leave.

Doric.—What! to act the lunatic in the dying man's chamber?

Sav.—Exactly the thing, and will bring your business to a short issue, for his last commands must be that you are not to marry his daughter.

Doric.—That's true, by Jupiter! and yet, hang it, impose upon a fellow at so serious a moment! I can't do it.

Sav.—You must, faith. I am answerable for your appearance, though it should be in a strait waistcoat. He knows your situation and seems the more desirous of an interview.

Doric.—I don't like encountering Rackett. She's an arch little devil and will discover the cheat.

Sav.—There's a fellow!—cheated ninety-nine women and now afraid of the hundredth.

Doric.—And with reason, for that hundredth is a widow.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.

Apartment at Hardy's.

Enter Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle.

Miss Ogle.—And so Miss Hardy is actually to be married to-night?

Mrs. Rackett.—If her fate does not deceive her. You are apprised of the scheme and we hope it will succeed.

Miss O.—(Aside.) Deuce take her! she's six years younger than I am. (To Mrs. Rackett.) Is Mr. Doricourt handsome?

Mrs. R.—Handsome, generous, young and rich. There's a husband for ye! Isn't he worth pulling caps for?

Miss O.—(Aside.) I'my conscience the widow speaks as though she'd give cap, ears and all, for him. (To *Mrs. Rackett*.) I wonder you didn't try to catch this wonderful man, *Mrs. Rackett*?

Mrs. R.—Really, *Miss Ogle*, I had not time. Besides, when I marry, so many stout young fellows will hang themselves that, out of regard for society in these sad times, I shall postpone it for a few years.

Enter *Sir George* and *Lady Frances*.

Sir George.—Well, here we are. But where's the knight of the woeful countenance?

Mrs. R.—Here soon, I hope—for a woeful night it will be without him.

Sir G.—Oh, fie! Do you condescend to pun?

Mrs. R.—Why not? It requires genius to make a good pun—some men of bright parts can't reach it. I know a lawyer who writes them on the back of his briefs and says they are of great use—in a dry cause.

Enter *Flutter*.

Flutter.—Here they come! here they come! Their coach stopped as mine drove off.

Saville.—(Without.) Come, let me guide you! This way, my poor friend! Why are you so furious?

Doricourt.—(Without.) The house of death—to the house of death!

Enter *Doricourt* and *Saville*.

Ah! this is the spot!

Lady Frances.—How wild and fiery he looks!

Miss O.—Now, I think he looks terrified!

Mrs. R.—I never saw a mad man before. Let me examine him. Will he bite?

Sav.—Pray, keep out of his reach, ladies. You don't know your danger. He's like a wildcat, if a sudden thought seizes him.

Mrs. R.—You talk like a keeper of wildcats. How much do you demand for showing the monster?

Doric.—(Aside.) I don't like this. I must rouse their sensibility. There! there she darts through the air in liquid flames. Down again. Now I have her. Oh, she burns! she scorches! Oh, she eats into my very heart!

(Falls into Saville's arms.)

Omnes.—Ha, ha, ha!

Flut.—Doricourt, give her highness a pinch.

Doric.—I am laughed at!

Mrs. R.—Laughed at? ay, to be sure. Why, I could play the madman better than you. There! there she is! Now I have her! Ha, ha, ha! Mr. Flutter, why don't you catch me?

(Falls into the arms of Flutter.)

Doric.—I'll leave the house; I'm covered with confusion.

(Going.)

Sir G.—Stay, sir—you must not go. 'Twas poorly done, Mr. Doricourt, to affect madness rather than fulfill your engagements.

Doric.—Affect madness? Saville, what can I do?

Sav.—Since you are discovered, confess the whole.

Doric.—Yes; since my designs have been so unaccountably discovered, I will avow the whole. I cannot love Miss Hardy, and I will never—

Sav.—Hold, my dear Doricourt? What will the world say to such—

Doric.—Damn the world! What will the world give me for the loss of happiness? Must I sacrifice my peace to please the world?

Sir G.—Yes, everything, rather than be branded with dishonor.

Lady F.—Though our arguments should fail, there is a pleader whom you surely cannot withstand. The dying Mr. Hardy supplicates you not to forsake his child.

Sir G.—The dying Mr. Hardy!

Sav.—The dying Mr. Hardy!

Mrs. R.—The dying Mr. Hardy!

Miss O.—The dying Mr. Hardy!

Flut.—The dying Mr. Hardy!

Enter Villers.

Villers.—The dying Mr. Hardy requests you to grant him a moment's conversation, Mr. Doricourt, though you should persist to send him miserable to the grave. Let me conduct you to his chamber.

Doric.—Oh, ay, anywhere; to the antipodes—to the moon—carry me. Do with me what you will.

Mrs. R.—I'll follow and let you know what passes.

(Exeunt Villers, Doricourt, Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle.)

Flut.—Ladies, ladies, have the charity to take me with you, that I may make no blunder in repeating the story.

(Exit.)

Lady F.—Sir George, you don't know Mr. Saville. (Exit.)

Sir G.—Ten thousand pardons; I have been with the utmost impatience at your door twice to-day.

Sav.—I am concerned you had so much trouble, Sir George.

Sir G.—Trouble! what a word! I hardly know how to address you, you having preserved Lady Frances in so imminent a danger. Start not, Saville; to protect Lady Frances was my right. You have wrested from me my dearest privilege.

Sav.—I hardly know how to answer such a reproach.

Sir G.—I do not mean to reproach you. I hardly know what I mean. There is one method by which you may restore peace to me. I have a sister, Saville, who is amiable, and you are worthy of her. You must go with us into Hampshire; and, if you see each other with the eyes I do, our felicity will be complete.

Sav.—I will attend you to Hampshire with pleasure; but not on the plan of retirement. Society has claims on Lady Frances that forbid it.

Sir G.—Claims, Saville?

Sav.—Yes, claims; Lady Frances was born to be the ornament of courts. She is sufficiently alarmed not to wander beyond the reach of her protector; and from the British court the most tenderly anxious husband could not wish to banish his wife. Bid her keep in her eye the bright example who presides there, the splendor of whose rank yields to the superior lustre of her virtue.

Reënter Mrs. Rackett, Lady Frances, Miss Ogle and Flutter.

Mrs. Rackett.—O heavens! do you know—

Flutter.—Let me tell the story. As soon as Doricourt—

Mrs. R.—I protest you shan't. Said Mr. Hardy—

Flut.—No, 'twas Doricourt spoke first—says he—no, 'twas the parson—says he—

Mrs. R.—Stop his mouth, Sir George—he'll spoil the tale.

Sir George.—Never heed the circumstances—the result—the result.

Mrs. R.—No, no; you shall have it in form. Mr. Hardy performed the sick man like an angel. He sat up in bed and talked so pathetically that the tears stood in Doricourt's eyes.

Flut.—Ay, stood—they did not drop, but stood. I shall in future be very exact; the parson seized the moment; you know they never miss an opportunity.

Mrs. R.—"Make haste," said Doricourt; "if I have time to reflect, poor Hardy will die unhappy."

Flut.—They were got as far as the day of judgment when we slipped out of the room.

Sir G.—Then, by this time they must have reached amazement, which everybody knows is the end of matrimony.

Mrs. R.—Ay, the reverend fathers ended the service with that word, prophetically—to teach the bride what a capricious monster a husband is.

Sir G.—I rather think it was sarcastically—to prepare the bridegroom for the unreasonable humors and vagaries of his helpmate.

Lady Frances.—Here comes the bridegroom of to-night.

Reënter Doricourt and Villers. Villers whispers to Saville, who goes out.

Omnes.—Joy! joy! joy! (Doricourt walks about in front.)

Miss Ogle.—If he's a sample of bridegrooms, keep me single! A younger brother, from the funeral of his father, could not carry a more fretful countenance.

Flut.—Oh, he's melancholy mad, I suppose.

Lady F.—You do not consider the importance of the occasion.

Villers.—No; nor how shocking a thing it is for a man to be forced to marry one woman whilst his heart is devoted to another.

Mrs. R.—Well, now 'tis over, I confess to you, Mr. Doricourt, I think 'twas a most ridiculous piece of Quixotism to give up the happiness of a whole life to a man who perhaps has but a few moments to be sensible of the sacrifice.

Flut.—So it appeared to me. But, thought I, Mr. Doricourt has travelled—he knows best.

Doricourt.—Zounds! confusion! did ye not all set upon me? Didn't ye talk to me of honor—compassion—justice?

Sir G.—Very true—you have acted according to their dictates, and I hope the utmost felicity of the married state will reward you.

Doric.—Never, Sir George! To felicity I bid adieu—but I will endeavor to be content. Where is my—I must speak it—where is my wife?

Enter Letitia, masked, led by Saville.

Saville.—Mr. Doricourt, this lady was pressing to be introduced to you.

Doric.—(Starting.) O!

Letitia.—I told you last night you should see me at a time when you least expected me, and I have kept my promise.

Vil.—Whoever you are, madam, you could not have arrived at a happier moment. Mr. Doricourt is just married.

Let.—Married! impossible! 'tis but a few hours since he swore to me eternal love; I believed him, gave him up my virgin heart—and now! Ungrateful sex!

Doric.—Your virgin heart! No, lady—my fate, thank heaven, yet wants that torture. Nothing but the conviction that you was another's could have made me think one moment of marriage, to have saved the lives of half mankind. But this visit, madam, is as barbarous as unexpected. It is now my duty to forget you, which, spite of your situation, I found difficult enough.

Let.—My situation! what situation?

Doric.—I must apologize for explaining it in this company—but, madam, I am not ignorant that you are the companion of Lord George Jennett—and this is the only circumstance that can give me peace.

Let.—I—a companion? ridiculous pretense! No, sir, know, to your confusion, that my heart, my honor, my name is unspotted as hers you have married; my birth equal to your own, my fortune large. That and my person might have been yours. But, sir, farewell! (Going.)

Doric.—Oh, stay a moment. Rascal! is she not—

Flut.—Who, she? O Lord!—no. 'Twas quite a different person that I meant. I never saw that lady before.

Doric.—Then, never shalt thou see her again.

(Shakes Flutter.)

Mrs. R.—Have mercy upon the poor man! Heavens! he'll murder him.

Doric.—Murder him! Yes, you, myself and all mankind. Sir George—Saville—Villers—'twas you who pushed me on this precipice; 'tis you who have snatched from me joy, felicity and life!

Mrs. R.—There! now, how well he acts the madman! This is something like? I knew he would do it well enough when the time came.

Doric.—Hard-hearted woman! enjoy my ruin—riot in my wretchedness.

Enter Hardy, hastily, in his night-cap and gown and face covered with flour.

Hardy.—This is too much. You are now the husband of my daughter, and how dare you show all this passion about another woman?

Doric.—Alive again!

Har.—Alive! ay, and merry. Here! wipe off the flour from my face. I was never in better health and spirits in all my life. I foresaw 'twould do. Why, my illness was only a fetch, man, to make you marry Letty.

Doric.—It was? Base and ungenerous! Well, sir, you shall be gratified. The possession of my heart was no object either with you or your daughter. My fortune and name were all you desired, and these—I leave ye. My native country I shall quit, nor never behold you more. But, lady, that, in my exile, I may have one consolation, grant me the favor you denied last night—let me behold all that mask conceals, that your whole image may be impressed on my heart and cheer my distant solitary hours.

Let.—This is the most awful moment of my life. Oh, Doricourt, the slight action of taking off my mask stamps me the most blest or miserable of women!

Doric.—What can this mean? Reveal your face, I conjure you.

Let.—Behold it. (Unmasks.)

Doric.—Rapture! transport! heaven!

Flut.—Now for a touch of the happy madman.

Let.—This little stratagem arose from my disappointment in not having made the impression on you I wished. The timidity of the English character threw a veil over me you could not penetrate. You have forced me to emerge in some measure from my natural reserve and to throw off the veil that hid me.

Doric.—I am yet in a state of intoxication—I cannot answer you. Speak on, sweet angel!

Let.—You see, I can be anything; choose, then, my character—you shall fix it. Shall I be an English wife? or, break-

ing from the bonds of nature and education, step forth to the world in all the captivating glare of foreign manners?

Doric.—You shall be nothing but yourself—nothing can be captivating that you are not. I will not wrong your penetration by pretending that you won my heart at the first interview; but you have now my whole soul—your person, your face, your mind, I would not exchange for those of any other woman breathing.

Har.—The dog! how well he makes up for past slights! Cousin Rackett, I wish you a good husband, with all my heart. Mr. Flutter, I'll believe every word you say this fortnight. Mr. Villers, you and I have managed this to a T. I never was so merry in my life. 'Gad, I believe I can dance.

(Footling.)

Doric.—Charming, charming creature!

Let.—Congratulate me, my dear friends! Can you conceive my happiness?

Har.—No, congratulate me, for mine is the greatest.

Flut.—No, congratulate me that I have escaped with life and give me some sticking plaster—this wildcat has torn the skin from my throat.

Har.—Come into the next room; I have ordered out every drop of my forty-eight, and I'll invite the whole parish of St. George's but we'll drink it out—except one dozen, which I shall keep under three double locks for a certain christening that I foresee will happen within this twelvemonth.

Doric.—My charming bride! It was a strange perversion of taste that led me to consider the delicate timidity of your deportment as the mark of an uninformed mind or inelegant manners. I feel now it is to that innate modesty that husbands of our own country owe a felicity that married men of other nations are strangers to; it is a sacred veil to your own charms; it is the surest bulwark to your husbands' honor; and curse on the hour—should it ever arrive—in which the ladies shall sacrifice to foreign graces the grace of modesty.

THE PROVOKED HUSBAND

BY

SIR JOHN VANBRUGH

COMPLETED

AFTER HIS DEATH

BY

COLLEY CIBBER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD TOWNLY.

SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

MANLY.

COUNT BASSET.

SQUIRE RICHARD.

JOHN MOODY.

LADY TOWNLY.

LADY GRACE.

LADY WRONGHEAD.

MISS JENNY.

MYRTILLA.

MRS. MOTHERLY.

MRS. TRUSTY.

PRELUDE.

The Provoked Husband, though written chiefly by Vanbrugh, was in part the work of Colley Cibber, who finished the comedy cut short by the death of the former. It presents a lively picture of fashionable life in London, about the close of the seventeenth century, and the sketch would not need much alteration to be equally true of the present day. Very well and strongly drawn is the character of Lady Townly, as a spoiled and heartless woman of fashion, who does not awake to her sense of duties as a wife until her husband is about to separate from her. Lord Townly and Manly are also striking personages, as is Count Basset, the villain of the play. Lady Grace is an excellent foil to the frivolity of her sister-in-law, and in the Wrongheads and Squire Richard are excellent sketches of country folk, who come up to London to make a figure in the great Babylon of England, but find themselves duped and ignored.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's Apartment.—A splendid Library.

Lord Townly seated.

Lord Townly.—Why did I marry? Was it not evident, my plain rational scheme of life was impracticable with a woman

of so different a way of thinking? Is there one article of it that she has not broken in upon? Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation. That, I have no reason to believe, is in question. But then, how long her profligate course of pleasure may make her able to keep it, is a shocking consideration! and her presumption, while she keeps it, insupportable! for, on the pride of that single virtue, she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birthright prerogative of a woman of quality. Amazing! that a creature, so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought toward her happiness. Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, not to care for her husband; and, while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch, is left at large, to take care of his own contentment. 'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be. Yet let me not be rash. Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient: and some tempers, when reproached, grow more untractable. Here she comes: let me be calm awhile.

Enter Lady Townly.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lord Townly.—Lord! my lord, what can I possibly do at home?

Lord T.—What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady T.—Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord T.—It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady T.—Comfortable! And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband! Lord, what notions of life some men have!

Lord T.—Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are fully as extravagant?

Lady T.—Yes, my lord; when the tame doves live cooped within the pen of your precepts, I do think them prodigious indeed!

Lord T.—And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray what must the world think of them then?

Lady T.—Oh, this world is not so ill bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it.

Lord T.—Nor am I, madam, a husband so well bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it: in short, the life you lead, madam—

Lady T.—Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

Lord T.—I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady T.—Why, whom would you have her please?

Lord T.—Sometimes her husband.

Lady T.—And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord T.—Certainly.

Lady T.—Why then we are agreed, my lord; for if I never go abroad till I am weary of being at home (which you know is the case), is it not equally reasonable, not to come home till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord T.—If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady T.—Don't let it be long in coming, then, for I am in haste.

Lord T.—Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady T.—Before I know the question?

Lord T.—Pshaw! Have ' power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady T.—You have.

Lord T.—And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady T.—Sincerely.

Lord T.—Now, then, recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me.

Lady T.—You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord T.—I think I have a right to it.

Lady T.—Why, then, my lord, to give you at once a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord T.—How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady T.—Oh, my lord, my lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord T.—Name one.

Lady T.—Fifty, if you please. To begin, then—in the morning—a married woman may have men at her toilet—invite them to dinner—appoint them a party in the stage-box, at the play—engross the conversation there—call them by their Christian names—talk louder than the players: from thence, jaunt into the city—take a frolicsome supper at an India House—perhaps, in her gileté de cœur, toast a pretty fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town—break, with the morning, into an assembly—crowd to the hazard-table—throw a familiar levant upon some sharp lurching man of quality, and, if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry, you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha! ha!

Lord T.—Prodigious!

(Aside.)

Lady T.—These now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife from that of a single woman.

Lord T.—Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife than in an unmarried woman?

Lady T.—Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom, time out of mind, my lord.

Lord F.—Custom, madam, is the law of fools, but it shall never govern me.

Lady T.—Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

Lord T.—I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady T.—You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a

woman has any prudence, why, she'll go abroad till he comes to himself again. (Going.)

Lord T.—Hold, madam; I am amazed you are not more uneasy at the life we lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady T.—Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses.

Lord T.—What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

Lady T.—Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true you have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher a hundred pounds these three weeks; but what then? A husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honor, you know; and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord T.—By heaven, if my whole fortune, thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady T.—That is, my lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord T.—No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies to deserve it. Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honor abroad, that keep you out of humor at home—at least, it shall not be my fault, if I have not more company. There, there's a bill of five hundred—and now, madam——

Lady T.—And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you.

Lord T.—If it be no offense, madam——

Lady T.—Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humor.

Lord T.—How long, in reason, then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

Lady T.—Oh, my dear, dear lord, now you have spoiled all again! How is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune! But, to show you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away, I have a strong prepossession, that, with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord T.—Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady T.—Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!—Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose them all again.

Lord T.—And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

Lady T.—Well, my lord, to let you see I design to play all the good housewife I can, I am now going to a party at quadrille, only to trifle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Duchess of Quiteright. (Exit.)

Lord T.—Insensible creature! neither reproaches nor indulgence, kindness nor severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual license has lulled her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken! But how to cure it—take my friend's opinion. Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness, to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter Williams.

Williams.—Mr. Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord T.—They did not deny me?

Wil.—No, my lord.

Lord T.—Very well; step up to my sister, and say I desire to speak with her.

Wil.—Lady Grace is here, my lord.

(Exit.)

Enter Lady Grace.

Lord T.—So, lady fair, what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady Grace.—A nuge folio, that has almost killed me. I think I have half read my eyes out.

Lord T.—On! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady G.—That's true; but anybody's thoughts are better than always one's own, you know.

Lord T.—Who's there?

Enter Williams.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr. Manly. (Exit Williams.)

Lady G.—And why is he expected, pray, my lord?

Lord T.—I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady G.—Your particular orders upon my being here look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord T.—And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, show, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady G. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord T.—Look you, my grave Lady Grace: in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady G.—I can't help that.

Lord T.—Ha! you can't help it! ha! ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable.

Lady G.—Pooh, you tease one, brother!

Lord T.—Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady G.—If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me, I know nothing of it.

Lord T.—Well, there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it. But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late,

he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady G.—Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord T.—Oh, that's the last thing he'll do! He'll never make you any offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady G.—Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord T.—Not directly—but that imports nothing; he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favorable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me: which, as yet, notwithstanding our friendship, I have neither declined, nor encouraged him to.

Lady G.—I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me; you know he has a satirical turn, but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue; and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord T.—You are right, child; when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer without scorn or coquetry.

Lady G.—Hush! he's here—

Enter Mr. Manly.

Manly.—My lord, your most obedient.

Lord T.—Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Manly.—Then I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands.—What, only you two!—How many visits may a man make before he falls into such unfashionable company! A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole

town is a gaading; I question if there is so particular a tête-à-tête again in the whole parish of St. James's.

Lady G.—Fie, fie, Mr. Manly, how censorious you are!

Manly.—I had not made the reflection, madam, but that I saw you an exception to it.—Where's my lady?

Lord T.—That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Manly.—Then I won't try, my lord.

Lord T.—But, 'tis probable, I may hear of her by the time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Manly.—Now, if that were my case—I believe I—but I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord T.—Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out, for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Manly.—Why, then, my lord, since you oblige me to proceed—I have often thought that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady G.—Bless me!

Lord T.—My treatment!

Manly.—Ay, my lord; you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover when you should have taken up the husband; and so, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself.—And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord T.—Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power.

Manly.—However, since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and, upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

Lord T.—You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend in our anxiety!

Manly.—Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady G.—Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord T.—With all my heart.

Lady G.—Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly?

Manly.—Apropos—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind——

Lord T.—Pray, let us have it.

Manly.—Do you know that your country neighbor, and my wise kinsman, Sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

Lord T.—The fool! what can be his business here?

Manly.—Oh, of the least importance, I'll assure you—no less than the business of the nation.

Lord T.—Explain.

Manly.—He has carried his election—against Sir John Worthland.

Lord T.—The deuce! What! for—for——

Manly.—The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord T.—A proper representative, indeed!

Lady G.—Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him?

Manly.—You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady G.—Was not that he, that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

Manly.—The same.

Lady G.—Pray, what are his circumstances! I know but very little of him.

Manly.—Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be some five or six thousand pounds a year; though, as it was left him saddled with two jointures and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is.—But, that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young huzzy, for love, without

a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest money make such a bawling about his ears, that at last he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estates two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a Parliament man.

Lord T.—A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Manly.—And with this politic prospect, he is now upon his journey to London—

Lord T.—What can it end in?

Manly.—Pooh! A journey into the country again.

Lord T.—Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, till the session is over?

Manly.—If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

Lord T.—How so?

Manly.—Oh, a bitter business! he had scarcely a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord T.—Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed.

Manly.—Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady G.—But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Manly.—No, madam, I would only spoil his project to save his fortune.

Lady G.—How are you concerned enough to do either?

Manly.—Why—I have some obligations to the family, madam: I enjoy at this time a pretty estate, which Sir Francis was heir-at-law to: but, by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter Williams.

Wil.—(To Manly.) Sir, here is one of your servants, from your house, desires to speak with you.

Manly.—Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord T.—Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

(Exit Williams.)

Enter James.

Manly.—Well, James, what's the matter?

James.—Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says Sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Manly.—Where is he?

James.—At our house, sir: he has been gaping and stumping about the streets, in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he may have a good lodging for a Parliament man, till he can hire a handsome whole house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Manly.—I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

Lord T.—Pr'thee let us have him here; he will divert us.

Manly.—Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady G.—I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Manly.—Then desire him to come hither, James

(Exit James.)

Lady G.—Pray, what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Manly.—Oh, his maître d'hotel, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

Lord T.—It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public in his own country.

Manly.—Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find that his utmost importance stands valued at—sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady G.—And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too?

Manly.—That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her than she yet knows of: and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month,

that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille in the parish of St. James's.

Lord T.—So that, by the time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Manly.—Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of his hopeful journey to London.—But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team!

Enter John Moody.

Oh, honest John!

Moody.—Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me your hand! Why, that's friendly naw. Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, measter? Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honor was here.

Lord T.—Mr. Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

Moody.—Thanks be praised, your honor, they are all in pretty good heart: tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady G.—I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody?

Moody.—Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humor: there's money enough stirring now.

Manly.—What has been the matter, John?

Moody.—Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Manly.—Come, tell us all.

Lord T.—Come, let us sit down.

Manly.—Pray, how do they travel?

Moody.—(Looking awkwardly about for a chair. Finds one and sits in it.) Why, i'the awld coach, measter; and, 'cause my lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapped to the four old

geldings, that neighbors might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postillion.

Manly.—Very well! The journey sets out as it should do. (Aside.) What, do they bring all the children with them, too!

Moody.—Noa, noa, only the younk squoire and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a head, a week, with John Growse, at Smokedung-hill farm.

Manly.—Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

Moody.—Anon, sir. (Not understanding him.)

Lord T.—And when do you expect him here, John?

Moody.—Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Weazlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut-lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we could set things to rights again.

Manly.—So they bring all the baggage with the coach, then?

Moody.—Ay, ay, and good store on it there is. (Moody here draws his chair to the front and sits facing the other three.) Why, my lady's geer alone were as much as filled four port-mantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit o'top on behind.

Lord T., Lady G. and Manly.—Ha! ha! ha!

Lady G.—Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

Moody.—Why, there's my lady and his worship, and the younk squoire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lapdog, and my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all. Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so they hoisted her into the coach box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady G.—Oh, I see them! I see them go by me. Ha! ha! (Laughing.)

Moody.—Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly as well as the back, too: children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese,

and cold boiled beef. And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague water, sack, tent and strong beer so plenty, as made th' awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say! (Gets up.)

Manly.—Ay, and well out on't again, John.

Moody.—(Sits again.) Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I. Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin we turned our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us aw the day lung. Crack goes one thing! bawnee goes another! Woa! says Roger. Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries Miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as tho'f they were struck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here that set out she would, tho'f I told her it was Childermas day.

Manly.—These ladies, these ladies, John—

Moody.—Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them; and I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

Lord T.—Well said, John—ha! ha!

Manly.—I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still?

Moody.—Ay, ay, much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me; tho' as for her goodness—why, she was willing to come to London, too. But, hawld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Manly.—Why, that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

Moody.—Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am. Odds wookers! tho'f he'll speak stautly woo, sometimes. But, then, he canno' hawld it—no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord T., Lady G. and Manly.—Ha! ha! ha!

Moody.—Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has hugey business with you; and will certainly wait upon you, by the time he can put on a clean neckcloth.

Manly.—Oh, John, I'll wait upon him.

Moody.—(Rising.) Why, you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Manly.—If you'll tell me where you lodge.

Moody.—Just i' the street next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the Golden Ball. It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and fluppits and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Manly.—A milliner's?

Moody.—Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly. Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' th' fore room.

Manly.—Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't. Who recommended that house to you, John?

Moody.—The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for, as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach side at York races—Count—Basset; ay, that's he.

Manly.—Basset! Oh, I remember; I know him by sight.

Moody.—Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to—

Manly.—As any sharper in town. (Aside.)

Moody.—Well, measter—

Lord T.—My services to Sir Francis and my lady, John.

Lady G.—And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

Moody.—Ay, your honors; they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Manly.—I'll bring my compliments myself; so, honest John—

Moody.—Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you! (Exit.)

Lord T.—What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady G.—Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon, in the country, must be very good company.

Lord T.—Oh, the tramotane! If this were known at half the quadrille tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

Lady G.—And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers.—But, to let you see that I

think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together, what think you if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Manly.—I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady G.—No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord as you have of me.

Lord T.—Say you so, madam? Have at you, then. Here! get the ombre-table and cards. (Exit.)

Lady G.—Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now.

Manly.—I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady G.—I am sorry my lord is not here to take his share of the compliment.—But he'll wonder what's become of us. (Exit.)

Manly.—It must be so—she sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation! How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointment that folly and falsehood ever gave me!

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives;
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate,
And only fools would mock the married state.

(Exit.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

Mrs. Motherly's House.

Enter Mrs. Motherly and Count Basset.

Count Basset.—I tell you there is not such a family in England for you. Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for anybody that was not sure to make you easy for the winter?

Mrs. Motherly.—Nay, I see nothing against it, sir, but the gentleman's being a Parliament man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humor, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count B.—Psha! Prythee, never trouble thy head; his pay is as good as the bank.—Why, he has above two thousand a year.

Mrs. M.—Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count B.—Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Mrs. M.—As how?

Count B.—Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Mrs. M.—Say you so? Why, then, I go, sir—and now, pray let's see the game.

Count B.—In one word, my cards lie thus: When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Mrs. M.—Is this your game? I would not give six-pence for it. What, have you a passion for her pin-money! No, no, country ladies are not so flush of it! Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtila, easy? Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count B.—I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

(Shows it, and puts it up again.)

Mrs. M.—Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count B.—How the devil can I, if you won't hear me? You must know, this country knight and his lady bring up with them their eldest son and a daughter——

Mrs. M.—Well——

Count B.—The son is an unlucky whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school, and begins to hanker after every wench in the family; now, him we must secure for Myrtila. The daughter, much of the same age; a pert huzzy, who, hav-

ing eight thousand pounds left her, by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be busy in her way too.—Now, what do you say to me?

Mrs. M.—Say? why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count B.—Pay as we go, I tell you; and the five hundred shall be staked down.

Mrs. M.—That's honest.

Enter Myrtilla.

So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myrtilla.—Yes, madam; but Mr. Moody tells us the lady always burns wax in her chamber, and we have none in the house.

Mrs. M.—Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count: this is a busy time, you know. (Exit.)

Count B.—Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr.—As well as a losing gamester can.

Count B.—Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! Suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr.—I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off your hands.

Count B.—What do you think of the young country 'squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr.—How should I know what to think of him?

Count B.—Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while at least to look about you

Enter Mrs. Motherly, in haste.

Mrs. M.—Sir! sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count B.—What, already?

Mrs. M.—They are just getting out! Won't you step, and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them. (Exit.)

Count B.—And think of what I told you. (Exit.)

Myr.—A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and, for that only reason, he wants to be rid of me. But while women are weak, men will be rogues.

Enter *Mrs. Motherly*, showing in *Lady Wronghead*, led by *Count Basset*.

Mrs. M.—If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlor, madam, only for the present, till your servants have got all your things in——

Lady Wronghead.—Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely obliging—I protest it gives me pain, though, to turn you out of your lodging thus.

Count B.—No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved: beside, *Mrs. Motherly's* my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Mrs. M.—The count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

Lady W.—Oh, dear madam! A good, well-bred sort of a woman. (Apart to the Count.)

Count B.—Oh, madam, she is very much among people of quality; she is seldom without them in her house.

Lady W.—Are there a good many people of quality in this street, *Mrs. Motherly*?

Mrs. M.—Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

Lady W.—I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

Count B.—It is what one would choose, indeed, madam.

Lady W.—Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Sir Francis.—(Within.) John Moody! stay you by the coach and see all our things out. Come, children.

Enter *Sir Francis*, 'Squire Richard and Miss Jenny.

Sir Francis.—Well, count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count B.—Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran.—Psha! how dost do, mon? Wounds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house, this.

Count B.—Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran.—Ey, ey, that's young hopeful. Why dost not bow, Dick?

'Squire Richard.—So I do, feyther.

Count B.—Sir, I'm glad to see you. I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran.—Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny.—Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

(Lady Wronghead whispers Mrs. Motherly, pointing to Myrtilla.)

Mrs. M.—Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady W.—A pretty sort of a young woman—Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny.—Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place. (Salutes Myrtilla.)

Myr.—You do me a great deal of honor, madam.—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny.—Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

'Squire R.—Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted with her, too?

Lady W.—You, you clown! stay till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran.—Od's heart, my Lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? How should he ever learn breeding if he does not put himself forward?

'Squire R.—Why, ay, feyther, does mother think, that I'd be uncivil to her? (Goes to her.)

Myr.—Master has so much good humor, madam, he would soon gain upon anybody. (He kisses Myrtilla.)

'Squire R.—Lo, you there, mother! an you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady W.—Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be so familiar.

'Squire R.—Why, an' I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? Naw you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes in an afternoon, may play at one thirty boneace, purely.

Jenny.—Speak for yourself, sir; d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

'Squire R.—Why, an you won't, yo' ma' let it alone; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all fours, without you.

Sir Fran.—Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr.—If master pleases, I'll show it him.

'Squire R.—What, the Humber? Hoy day! why, does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

Sir Fran.—Pooh! you silly Tony! Ombre is a game at cards that the better sort of people play three together at.

'Squire R.—Nay, the more the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grained—

Jenny.—Lord! this boy is enough to deafen people—and one has really been stuffed up in a coach so long that— Pray, madam—could I not get a little powder for my hair?

Myr.—If you please to come along with me, madam.

(Exeunt Myrtilia and Jenny.)

'Squire R.—What, has sister taken her away, naw? Mess, I'll go and have a little game with them. (Exit after them.)

Lady W.—Well, count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here, sometimes.

Sir Fran.—Ay, ay, pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, now and then, when thou'st naught to do.

Count B.—Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran.—Why, ay, now, that's hearty!

Mrs. M.—Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea after your fatigue?

Lady W.—If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs. (Exit Mrs. Motherly.)
Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran.—Moody!

Count B.—Sha'n't we stay for Sir Francis, madam?

Lady W.—Lard, don't mind him! He will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran.—Ay, ay, ne'er heed me—I have things to look after.. (Exeunt Lady Wronghead and Count Basset.)

Enter John Moody.

Moody.—Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran.—Ay, is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

Moody.—Aw but a few hand-boxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy. But, a plague on him, the monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph has shawered after him.

Sir Fran.—Why, let him go to the devil! no matter and the hawnds had had him a month ago. But I wish the coach and horses were got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us here, John; therefore I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

Moody.—Alas a day! sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but, howsomdever, we'st ta' the best care we can of um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran.—Well, well, make haste, then.

(Moody goes out and returns.)

Moody.—Od's flesh! here's Mr. Monly come to wait upon your worship.

Sir Fran.—Where is he?

Moody.—Just coming in at threshold.

Sir Fran.—Then go about your business. (Exit Moody.)

Enter Manly.

Cousin Manly! sir, I am your very humble servant.

Manly.—I heard you were come, Sir Francis—and——

Sir Fran.—Od's heart! this was so kindly done of you, naw!

Manly.—I wish you may think it so, cousin! for, I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran.—How soa, sir?

Manly.—Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran.—Look you, cousin; tho' I know you wish me well, yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Manly.—I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose?

Sir Fran.—Why, ay, it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise (and hav'n't found yet that I'm a fool), there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Manly.—Nay, if you have that secret——

Sir Fran.—Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Manly.—If it be anything for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran.—In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what at Westminster—that's one thing.

Manly.—Very well! but what good is that to you?

Sir Fran.—Why not me as much as it does other folks?

Manly.—Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran.—Why, ay! there's it, naw! you'll say that I have lived all my day i' th' country—what then?—I'm o' th' quorum—I have ben at sessions, and I have made speeches there! ay, and at vestry too—and, mayhap, they may find

here—that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Manly.—If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here will be, to show that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran.—How d'ye mean?

Manly.—That Sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran.—Petition! why, ay! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—Why, you forget, cousin, Sir John's i' the wrong side, mon!

Manly.—I doubt, Sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for, in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day and despatching them immediately.

Sir Fran.—With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again the better.

Manly.—And this is the scheme you have laid down to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran.—In one word, cousin, I think it my duty!—The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and, since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they sha'n't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Manly.—Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran.—And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all, neither—

Manly.—You astonish me! what, and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran.—Ay, thof I say it—every whit, cousin.—You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Manly.—Very well.

Sir Fran.—In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up—

Manly.—(Aside.) And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran.—Naw, if I doan't lay it in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out far herself—

Manly.—Not unlikely.

Sir Fran.—Therefore, I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honor.

Manly.—(Aside.) Oh, he has taken my breath away! but I must bear him out.—Pray, Sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran.—Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dash'd! Then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her now to stond still, you know.

Manly.—Very well; but when she is thus accomplished, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran.—Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin; for, if I take it right, that's a post that folks are not more willing to get into than they are to get out of.—It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—it will bear blossoms, and fruit, that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Manly.—Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them, too.

Sir Fran.—She is but just taking a dish of tea with the count and my landlady—I'll call her down.

Manly.—No, no; if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fran.—Odsheart! but you mun see her naw, cousin; what! the best friend I have in the world!—Here, sweet-heart! (To a Servant without.) Pr'ythee, desire the lady and the gentleman to come down a bit; teil her, here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Manly.—Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fran.—You mun know him, to be sure; why, it's Count Basset.

Manly.—Oh, is it he? Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran.—Troth, I think so too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life. Why, here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Manly.—Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already! (Aside.)

Sir Fran.—Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Manly.—That was happy, indeed; and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran.—Why, ay! that's it! and I think there could not be such another.

Manly.—Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran.—Only now and then, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Manly.—Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day. Mercy on us! what a head he has! (Aside.)

Sir Fran.—So, here they come!

Enter Lady Wronghead and Count Basset.

Lady Wronghead.—Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Manly.—Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

Lady W.—Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Manly.—Yet the way of living, here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady W.—Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life that are always moped up in the country?

Count Basset.—Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in a quite right light, madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant.

Manly.—Familiar puppy! (Aside.) Sir, your most obedient— I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. (Aside.)

(Sir Francis retires up the stage and sits.)

Count B.—Was you at White's this morning, sir?

Manly.—Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count B.—Pray—what—was there anything done there?

Manly.—Much as usual, sir; the same dally carcasses and the same crows about them.

Count B.—The Demolivre baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Manly.—I hope, sir, you had your share of him?

Count B.—No, 'faith; I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady W.—What a genteel, easy manner he has! (Aside.)

Manly.—A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here! (Aside.)

Enter 'Squire Richard, with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fran.—(Rising and coming forward.) How now, Dick; what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

'Squire Richard.—I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady W.—And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

'Squire R.—Why, I was but running after sister and t'other young woman, into a little room just naw; and so with that they slapped the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so I got a dab of wet brown paper here to swage it a while.

Lady W.—They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse play?

Sir Fran.—Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

Manly.—Yes, truly, his skull seems to be of a comfortable-thickness! (Aside.)

Sir Fran.—Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—sir, this is your godson.

'Squire R.—(Crossing to Manly.) Honored godfeyther! I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Manly.—Thou hast it, child; and, if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Enter Miss Jenny and Mrs. Motherly.

Lady W.—Oh, here's my daughter, too! Miss Jenny, don't you see your cousin, child?

Manly.—And as for thee, my pretty dear— (Salutes her.) Mayst thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother!

Jenny.—I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Manly.—Ha, Miss Pert! now that's a thought that seems to have been hatched in the girl on this side Highgate.

(Aside.)

Sir Fran.—Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady W.—That's only from her country education, Sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there, so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Manly.—Oh, the best place in the world for it! every woman she meets will teach her something of it. There's the good gentlewoman in the house looks like a knowing person; even she, perhaps, will be so good as to show her a little London behavior.

(Squire and Jenny retire up the stage and play awkwardly.)

Mrs. Motherly.—Alas, sir, miss won't stand long in need of my instructions!

Manly.—That, I dare say. What thou canst teach her she will soon be mistress of. (Aside.)

Mrs. M.—If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady W.—Very obliging, indeed, Mrs. Motherly!

Sir Fran.—Very kind and civil, truly! I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Manly.—Oh, yes; and very friendly company.

Count B.—Humph! 'Egad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off. If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions. (*Aside.*)

Manly.—Well, sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family.

Count B.—It is very true, sir—I was just thinking of going. He don't care to leave me, I see; but it's no matter, we have time enough. (*Aside.*) And so, ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant. (*Exit and drops a letter.*)

Lady W.—Ha! what paper's this! Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it.

(*Puts it in her pocket.*)

Sir Fran.—Why in such haste, cousin?

(*Jenny leaves the 'Squire and comes forward.*)

Manly.—Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey!

Lady W.—I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Manly.—Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny.—And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Manly.—Nor you, neither, I dare say, my young mistress?

Jenny.—I hope not, sir.

Manly.—Ha, Miss Mettle! Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran.—Only to see you to the door, sir.

Manly.—Oh, Sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony!

Sir Fran.—Nay, sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant. (*Exit Manly.*)

Jenny.—This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humor; I don't like him half so well as the count. (*Returns to 'Squire.*)

Sir Fran.—Pooh! that's another thing, child. Cousin is a little proud, indeed! but, however, you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

(*'Squire and Jenny fighting in the background.*)

Lady W.—Psha! a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late, about money, since you are a Parliament man! What, we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humors, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs! and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Mrs. M.—Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran.—Who! cousin Manly?

Lady W.—To whom, pray?

Mrs. M.—Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it? To my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace!

Lady W.—Lady Grace!

Mrs. M.—Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers.

Lady W.—I don't like that, neither.

(*Squire comes forward.*)

Sir Fran.—Naw I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady W.—(*Aside.*) If it is not too far gone, at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

'Squire R.—Pray, feyther, haw long will it be to supper?

(*Jenny comes forward.*)

Sir Fran.—Odso, that's true! Step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

Mrs. M.—If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to show her where she may have anything you have a mind to.
(*Exit.*)

Sir Fran.—Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

'Squire R.—Odds flesh! what, is it not i' the hawse yet? I shall be famished—but hawld! I'll go and ask Doll, an' there's none o' the goose poy left.

Sir Fran.—Do so—and, dost hear, Dick? see if there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i' th' coach with us: if there be, clap a toast in it and bring it up.

'Squire R.—With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn'a I, feyther?

Sir Fran.—Ay, ay; as thee and I always drink it for breakfast. Go thy ways.
(*Exit 'Squire Richard.*)

Lady W.—This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fran.—Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after his journey.

Lady W.—Nay, even breed him your own way. He has been cramming, in or out of the coach, all this day, I am sure. I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

Jenny.—Oh, as for that, I could eat a great deal more, mamma; but, then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

Enter 'Squire Richard, with a full tankard.

'Squire Richard.—Here, feyther, I ha' browght it. It's well I went as I did; for our Doll had just bak'd a toast and was going to drink it herself.

Sir Fran.—Why, then, here's to thee, Dick! (Drinks.)

'Squire R.—Thonk you, feyther.

Lady W.—Lord, Sir Francis, I wonder you can encourage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor! It's enough to make him quite stupid!

'Squire R.—Why, it never hurts me, mother; and I sleep like a hawnd after it. (Drinks.)

Sir Fran.—I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years, and, by your leave, madam, I don't know that I want wit, ha! ha!

Jenny.—But you might have had a great deal more, papa, if you would have been governed by my mother.

Sir Fran.—Daughter, he that is governed by his wife has no wit at all.

Jenny.—Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir; for I love to govern, dearly! (Runs about.)

Sir Fran.—You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

Lady W.—Pray, Sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

'Squire R.—(After a long draught.) Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

Jenny.—You! you think I'm too forward! Sure, brother mud! your head's too heavy to think of anything but your belly.

Lady W.—Well said, mlass! He's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

'Squire R.—No, nor she shawnt be my mistress, while she's younger sister.

Sir Fran.—Well said, Dick! Show them that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

'Squire R.—So I will! and I'll drink agen, for all her.

(Drinks.)

Enter John Moody.

Sir Fran.—So, John, how are the horses?

Moody.—Troth, sir, I ha' na' good opinlon o' this tawn; it's made up o' mischief, I think.

(Lady Wronghead retires up the stage and sits.)

Sir Fran.—What's the matter naw?

Moody.—Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to the street end, with the coach, here, a great lugger-headed cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawld o't, and has poo'd it aw to bits—crack went the perch! down goes the coach! and wang says the glasses all to shivers! Marcy upon us! and this be London; would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jenny.—What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran.—Hold your tongue, Jenny. Was Roger in no fault in all this?

Moody.—Noa, sir, nor I noither. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumpkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! (Jenny retires and sits.) And so the folks said that stood by. Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye. Your meyster, says he; your meyster may kiss my—and so he clapp'd his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran.—I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Oddsbud, if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him!

'Squire R.—Ay, do, feyther; have him before the Parliament.

Sir Fran.—Oddsbud, and so I will! I will make him know who I am. Where does he live?

Moody.—I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran.—What's the rascal's name?

Moody.—I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

'Squire R.—What! my name?

Sir Fran.—Where did he go?

Moody.—Sir, he went home. (Squire retires.)

Sir Fran.—Where's that?

Moody.—By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran.—Will he so? Odzooks, get me a constable!

Lady W.—(Coming forward.) Pooh, get you a good supper! Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be helped. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world. For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran.—Why, ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady W.—Therefore, see, to-morrow, if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

Moody.—Why, troth, sir, I don't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran.—D'ye think so, John?

Moody.—Why, you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran.—Why, then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper; and come and get off my boots.

(Exeunt Sir Francis and Moody.)

Lady W.—(Jenny comes forward.) In the meantime, m'iss, do you step to Handy and bld her get some fresh night-clothes. (Exit.)

Jenny.—Yes, mamma, and some for myself, too.

'Squire R.—Odds flesh! and what mun I do all alone?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,

And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses.

(Drinks, and, while drinking, Jenny goes behind him and pushes his head forward. Exeunt 'Squire and Jenny, fighting.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's house.

Enter Lord Townly and Williams.

Lord Townly.—Who's there?

Williams.—My lord!

Lord T.—Bld them get dinner. (Exit Williams.)

Lady Grace, your servant!

Enter Lady Grace.

Lady Grace.—What! is the house up already? My lady is not dressed yet.

Lord T.—No matter—it's five o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady G.—Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

Lord T.—That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

Lady G.—No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord T.—But, pr'ythee, sister, what humor is she in to-day?

Lady G.—Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you! She won a good deal last night.

Lord T.—I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady G.—However, she is better in good humor than bad.

Lord T.—Much alike: when she is in good humor, other people only are the better for it—when in a very ill humor, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have a share of her.

Lady G.—Well, we won't talk of that now. Does anybody dine here?

Lord T.—Manly promised me—— By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady G.—I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord T.—How so?

Lady G.—Why—I have received a letter this morning that shows him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord T.—A letter! from whom?

Lady G.—That I don't know: but there it is.

(Gives a letter.)

Lord T.—Pray, let's see—— (Reads.) "The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend and humble servant, unknown, etc."

Lady G.—And this was the inclosed. (Gives another.)

Lord T.—(Reads.) "To Charles Manly, Esq.: Your manner of living with me of late convinces me that I now grow as painful to you as to myself; but, however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did before I left an honest income for the vain hopes of being ever yours.
MYRTILLA DUPE."

"P. S.—'Tis above four months since I received a shilling from you."

Lady G.—What think you now?

Lord T.—I am considering——

Lady G.—You see it's directed to him?

Lord T.—That's true; but the postscript seems to be a reproach that, I think, he is not capable of deserving.

Lady G.—But who could have concern enough to send it to me?

Lord T.—I have observed that these sort of letters from unknown friends generally come from secret enemies.

Lady G.—What would you have me do in it?

Lord T.—What I think you ought to do—fairly show it him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady G.—Will not that have a very odd look from me?

Lord T.—Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best way of preventing his addresses.

Lady G.—But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance?

Lord T.—I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady G.—Pray, what is it you do think, then?

Lord T.—Why, certainly, that it's much more probable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concerned in it.

Enter Williams.

Williams.—Mr. Manly, my lord. (Exit.)

Lord T.—Do you receive him, while I step a minute to my lady. (Exit.)

Enter Manly.

Manly.—Madam, your most obedient—they told me my lord was here.

Lady G.—He will be here presently; he is but just gone to my sister.

Manly.—So, then, my lady dines with us?

Lady G.—No; she is engaged.

Manly.—I hope you are not of her party, madam?

Lady G.—Not till after dinner.

Manly.—And pray how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady G.—Much as usual: she has visits till about eight; after that, till court time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my Lady Moonlight; and from thence they go together to my Lord Noble's assembly.

Manly.—And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady G.—Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Manly.—But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady G.—There is no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Manly.—And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady G.—How do you mean?

Manly.—Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady G.—What induced you, then, to be with them?

Manly.—Idleness and the fashion.

Lady G.—No mistresses in the case?

Manly.—To speak honestly—yes—being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady G.—And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them, twice as much as they were worth?

Manly.—Madam!

Lady G.—I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly—I don't know a man in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit, than yourself: and yet I have a reason in my hand, here, to think you have your fallings.

Manly.—I have, infinite, madam! but I am sure the want of an implicit respect for you is not among the number—Pray what is in your hand, madam?

Lady G.—Nay sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you. (Gives him a letter.)

Manly.—To me! I don't remember the hand.

(Reads to himself.)

Lady G.—I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural. (Aside.) Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr. Manly, that I should never have shown you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Manly.—I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady G.—I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse, for my taking this liberty.

Manly.—I never yet saw you do anything, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favor I am going to ask you.

Lady G.—I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

Manly.—Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

Lady G.—Inclosed to me in this without a name.

Manly.—If there be no secret in the contents, madam—

Lady G.—Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it! but, as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Manly.—You'll oblige me, madam.

(He takes the other letter, and reads.)

Lady G.—(Aside.) Now am I in the oddest situation! Methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something—Oh, lud, would it were over!

Manly.—Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady G.—I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Manly.—A little patience, madam. First, as to the insinuation you mention—

Lady G.—Oh, what is he going to say now? (Aside.)

Manly.—Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late, yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account: and this, taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably, with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady G.—My Lady Wronghead!

Manly.—Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady G.—What view could she have in writing it?

Manly.—To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady G.—That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly.

Manly.—Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady G.—I am sure I have no right to inquire into it.

Manly.—Suppose you may not, madam, yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

Lady G.—Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me as to want curiosity. But pray, do you suppose, then, this Myrtille is a real, or a fictitious name?

Manly.—Now, I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house, where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtille—this letter may have been written by her—but how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honor to find out. (Going.)

Lady G.—Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Manly.—'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady G.—Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Manly.—Madam, I can neither eat nor rest till I see an end of this affair.

Lady G.—But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Manly.—Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam,—then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity. (Exit.)

Lady G.—Well—and now, what am I to think of all this! Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is

seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me? I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side.

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Mrs. Trusty.—Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humor.

Lady G.—How so?

Mrs. T.—Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to-day—upon which, my lady said she could not be ready; upon that, my lord ordered them to stay the dinner—and then, my lady ordered the coach—then my lord took her short, and said, he had ordered the coachman to set up—then my lady made him a great courtesy, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant; but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready. (Exit.)

Lady G.—Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company. (Exit.)

Enter Lady Townly, Lord Townly following.

Lady Townly.—Well, look you, my lord. I can bear it no longer! nothing still, but about my faults—my faults! an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord Townly.—Why, madam, if you wont hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady T.—Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord T.—And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady T.—Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to. But, to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction! Why, but last Thursday, now! there you wisely amended one of my faults,

as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was I not forced to get company at home? And was not it almost three o'clock this morning before I was able to come to myself again? And then the fault is not mended neither—for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning old lace, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord T.—Well, the manner of women's living, of late, is insupportable! and, one way or other—

Lady T.—It's to be mended, I suppose—why, so it may; but then, my dear lord, you must give one time—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha! ha!

Lord T.—Madam, I am not in a humor now to trifle!

Lady T.—Why, then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way now. You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—but, pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world—my active spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—Faugh?

Lord T.—Fie, he, madam! Is this your way of reasoning? 'Tis time to wake you, then—'tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion those ill hours.

Lady T.—Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

Lord T.—Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves and sharpers in embroidery—or, what to me is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, cropped coxcombs!

Lady T.—And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their follies dangerous!

Lord T.—Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady T.—What do you mean?

Lord T.—That women sometimes lose more than they are able to pay; and, if the creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady T.—My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you! I'll have you to know I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord T.—So are the churches—now and then.

Lady T.—My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord T.—Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady T.—I see what you drive at all this while;—you would lay an imputation on my fame to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord T.—Have a care, madam; don't let me think you value your chastity only to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious—I, madam, have a reputation, too, to guard, that's dear to me as yours.—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault if ever they render him contemptible.

Lady T.—My lord, my lord—you would make a woman mad!

Lord T.—Madam, madam, you would make a man a fool!

Lady T.—If heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord T.—Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

Lady T.—A beggar! Cræsus! I am out of patience! I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord T.—That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady T.—Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord T.—Then, madam, you shall never come home again.
(Exit.)

Lady T.—What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before! The man always used to have manners in his worst humors. There's something that I don't see at the bottom of all this.—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. (Retires up the stage and returns.)—Mr. Manly, your servant!

Enter Manly.

Manly.—I ask pardon for this intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady T.—I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Manly.—Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady T.—Sir, you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Manly.—(Aside.) What a well-bred age do we live in!
(Exit.)

Enter Lady Grace.

Lady T.—Oh, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

Lady Grace.—I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady T.—Why, yes, and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a fluster here——

Lady G.—Bless me! for what?

Lady T.—Only our usual breakfast! we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning—we have been charming company!

Lady G.—I am mighty glad of it! Sure it must be a vast happiness when man and wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady T.—Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady G.—Now, I should be afraid that, where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady T.—Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others. Why, here's my lord and I now,—we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady G.—Certainly that must be vastly pretty!

Lady T.—Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I (both get chairs and sit) after a pretty cheerful tête-à-tête meal, sat us down by the fireside in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of one another's being in the room.—At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he—aw—you came home very late last night— 'Twas but just turned of two, says I— I was in bed—aw—by eleven, says he— So you are every night, says I— Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late— How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often? Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained us about fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

(Both rise.)

Lady G.—But, pray, in such sort of family dialogues (though extremely well for passing the time), don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady T.—Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all—a smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet! Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious that there would be no bearing it.

Lady G.—Well, certainly, you have the most elegant taste—

Lady T.—Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and again, he—talked something oddly of—turning me out of doors.

Lady G.—Oh, have a care of that!

Lady T.—Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for it. But, to be serious, my dear, what would you really have a woman do in my case?

Lady G.—Why, if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady T.—Oh, you wicked thing! how could you tease one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that, except giving me money, there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me. And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly perhaps by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies—my heart bounds at a ball—and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction!—cards enchant me—and dice put me out of my little wits. Dear, dear hazard! Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one! Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady G.—Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women—there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it! You see how it makes the men swear and curse! and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why—

Lady T.—That's very true; one is a little put to it sometimes not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady G.—Well; and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady T.—Why, upon a very hard case indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady G.—Well, and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

Lady T.—Oh, yes—I have forsworn it.

Lady G.—Seriously!

Lady T.—Solemnly!—a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady G.—And how can you answer that?

Lady T.—My dear, what we say when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child—I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady G.—Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady T.—Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable! for you will marry, I suppose?

Lady G.—I can't tell but I may.

Lady T.—And won't you live in town?

Lady G.—Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady T.—My stars! and you would really live in London half the year, to be sober in it?

Lady G.—Why not?

Lady T.—Why, can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Lady G.—So I would—t'other half year.

Lady T.—And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Lady G.—A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

Lady T.—Oh, of all things, let's hear it.

Lady G.—Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards—soberly; managing my family; looking into its accounts, playing with my children—if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.

Lady T.—Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For, sure, such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years.—Under a great tree! (Laughing.) Oh, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme, too—for I am charmed with the country one!

Lady G.—You shall; and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady T.—Well, though I am sure it will give me the vapors, I must hear it, however.

Lady G.—Why, then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still it should be soberly; for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to—

Lady T.—Ay, now for it!

Lady G.—I would every day be as neat as a bride.

Lady T.—Why, the men say that's a great step to be made one.—Well, now you are dressed, pray let's see to what purpose?

Lady G.—I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court—sometimes to an assembly—nay, play at quadrille—soberly; I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera—but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again; and, lastly. I can't say but, for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade: and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly!

Lady T.—Well, if it had not been for this last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady G.—Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady T.—Tolerable? deplorable! Why, child, all you propose is but to endure life; now, I want to enjoy it.

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Mrs. Trusty.—Ma'am, your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady T.—Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? for last night I was poisoned.

Mrs. T.—Yes, ma'am, there were some come in this morning. (Exit.)

Lady T.—My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious—

Lady G.—That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady T.—You will call on me at Lady Revel's?

Lady G.—Certainly.

Lady T.—But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear!

Lady G.—When it does, I will—soberly break from you.

Lady T.—Why then, till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness. (Exit.)

Lady G.—There she goes!—Dash, into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman, she is really a fine creature, and sometimes infinitely agreeable! Nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with; but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost, that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in I tremble to imagine! (Exit.)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Mrs. Motherly's House.

Enter Sir Francis Wronghead.

Sir Francis.—What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Mrs. Motherly.—Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran.—Well, well, I sha'n't stay supper for them, I can tell them that: for, ods heart! I have nothing in me but a toast and tankard since morning.

Mrs. M.—I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran.—Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Mrs. M.—It is so, indeed, sir.

Sir Fran.—But howsoever, Mrs. Motherly, when we consider that what we suffer is for the good of our country—

Mrs. M.—Why truly, sir, that is something.

Sir Fran.—Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't. I have heard of gentlemen so very zealous, that, for the good of their country, they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Mrs. M.—Oh, the goodness of them! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran.—So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected, when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved, that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Mrs. M.—Dear me! what a fine thing 'tis to be so popular! —Here's company, sir. (Exit.)

Enter Manly.

Manly.—Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran.—Cousin Manly!

Manly.—I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran.—Troth, all as busy as bees! I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Manly.—By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran.—Why, 'faith, you have hit it, sir! I was advised to lose no time; so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Manly.—Right! that was doing business: but who had you to introduce you?

Sir Fran.—Why, nobody. I remember I had heard a wise man say—My son, be bold—so, troth, I introduced myself.

Manly.—As how, pray?

Sir Fran.—Why, thus—look ye.—Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead, of Bumper Hall, and member of Parliament for the borough of Guzzledown. Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof' I have not the honor to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Now, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small encouragement. And thof' I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet, I believe, you won't say I mist it now!

Manly.—Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran.—So, when I found him so courteous—my lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony, why truly, says I, I think now is as good as another time.

Manly.—Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran.—Ay, ay! I had a mind to let him see that I were none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Manly.—Very good.

Sir Fran.—So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and, as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Manly.—So, this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran.—'Tcod, I shot him flying, cousin! Some of your half-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha got it at last, neither.

Manly.—Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran.—You shall hear, cousin—— Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha turned your

thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be choosers; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a year, will be well enough to be doing with till something better falls in—for I thought it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

Manly.—No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran.—Right! there's it! ay, cousin, I see you know the world.

Manly.—Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day.—Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran.—Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you in any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble—I'll do your business: with that he turned him abawt to somebody with a colored ribbon across here, that looked, in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Manly.—Ha! so upon these hopes you are to make your fortune?

Sir Fran.—Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Manly.—Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for, just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran.—Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Manly.—Nor I neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you perhaps may have better fortune; for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day—you have been since down at the house, I presume?

Sir Fran.—Oh, yes; I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Manly.—Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran.—Why, troth, I can't well tell you what they have done, but I can tell you what I did; and, I think, pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Manly.—How was that?

Sir Fran.—Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate, about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were

so long-winded o' both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um; howsomever, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience—so, when they came to put the question, as they call it—I don't know haw 'twas—but I doubt I cried, aye! when I should ha' cried no!

Manly.—How came that about?

Sir Fran.—Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humored sort of a gentleman, one Mr. Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried, Aye! gives me a hearty shake by the hand.—Sir, says he, you are a man of honor, and a true Englishman! and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so, with that he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd, into the lobby—so I knew nowght—but, odds flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post—for I were told afterwards I should have staid where I was.

Manly.—And so, if you had not quite made your 'fortune before, you have clinched it now!--Ah, thou head of the Wrong-heads!

(*Aside*.)

Lady Wronghead.—(Without.) Very well, very well.

Sir Fran.—Odso! here's my lady come home at last!

Enter *Lady Wronghead*, *Count Basset*, and *Miss Jenny*.

Lady W.—Cousin, your servant: I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a lelsure moment to return your last visit.

Manly.—Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

Lady W.—You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Manly.—At your own time, madam.

Count Basset.—I must say that for Mr. Manly, madam: if making people easy is the rule of good breeding, he is certainly the best bred man in the world.

Manly.—Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find. (*Aside*.) I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

Count B.—I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Manly.—The most impudent modesty that ever I met with!
(*Aside.*)

Lady W.—Lard, how ready his wit is!
(*Aside.*)

Sir Fran.—Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman?
(*Apart.*)

Manly.—Oh, among the ladies, certainly.
(*Apart.*)

Sir Fran.—And yet he's stout as a lion. Waunds, he'll storm any thing!
(*Apart.*)

Manly.—Will he so? Why then, sir, take care of your citadel.
(*Apart.*)

Sir Fran.—Ah! you are a wag, cousin!
(*Apart.*)

Manly.—I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you.

Jenny.—(Running to Manly.) Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things: and to-morrow we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye-call-it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king; and so on Tuesday——

Lady W.—Hold, hold, miss! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Manly.—Yes, yes, and she is improved with a vengeance!
(*Aside.*)

Jenny.—Lawrd, mamma! I am sure I did not say any harm; and, if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

Lady W.—O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong——

Sir Fran.—Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! Now tack it down an' you can.

Jenny.—All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Manly.—My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you.

Jenny.—Look you there now, madam.

Lady W.—Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny.—(Turning away, goes to Count Basset, and pouting.) I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir!—I know why she does it, well enough—

(Aside to the Count.)

Count B.—Hush, hush, my dear! Don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us.

Jenny.—Let her suspect, what do I care!—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she—though perhaps I am not so afraid of her. (Jenny retires a few steps.)

Count B.—(Aside.)—Egad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear!

(All retire back except Lady W. and Count B.)

Lady W.—(Aside.) The young flirt is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count B.—Pardon me, madam, I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her. In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her to blind it:—'twill be better to take no notice of her behavior to me. (Apart.)

Lady W.—You are right; I will be more cautious.

(Apart.)

Count B.—To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her.

(Apart.)

Lady W.—We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair. (Jenny advances.) Go on with the girl, and don't mind me. (Apart.)

Count B.—I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady W.—Jenny! come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good. (Manly advances.)

Jenny.—Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Manly.—If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family! (Aside.)

Enter Myrtilla.—*Manly* talks apart with her.

Lady W.—Well, Sir Francis, and what never have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran.—News, madam! 'Ecod, I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you. A word in your ear. I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a year already.

Lady W.—Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now, who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran.—(Retiring back.) Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

Lady W.—(Retiring back.) Mighty well! Come—let me have another hundred pounds, then.

Sir Fran.—Another, child? Waunds! you have had one hundred this morning; pray, what's become of that, my dear?

Lady W.—What's become of it? Why, I'll show you, my love. Jenny, have you the bills about you?

Jenny.—(Retiring.) Yes, mamma.

Lady W.—What's become of it! Why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count here.

Jenny.—Yes, indeed, papa! and that would hardly do neither.—There's the account.

Sir Fran.—(Turning over the bills.) Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Manly.—Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes in to all I proposed to you? (Apart.)

Myrtilla.—Sir, I'll answer with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir. (Apart.)

Manly.—I am going home directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and, if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it. (Apart.)

Myr.—Sir, she shall not fail you. (Apart—Exit.)

Sir Fran.—Odds life, madam! here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale.

(Jenny and 'Squire romping.)

Lady W.—There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis.—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that, in necessaries for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran.—No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o'one thing here that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady W.—My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? Why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady in this town, is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny.—(Romping nearer.) Sure, papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady W.—Now, that is so like him! (Exit 'Squire.)

Manly.—So, the family comes on finely! (Aside.)

Sir Fran.—(Advances.) An hundred pound in the morning, and want another before night? Waunds and fire! the lord mayor of London could not hold it at this rate!

Manly.—Oh, do you feel it, sir? (Aside.)

Lady W.—My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran.—Compose the devil, madam!—Why, do you consider what a hundred pound a-day comes to in a year!

(Jenny flirting with Count Basset in the background.)

Lady W.—My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time.—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a-year this morning.—That now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

Sir Fran.—A thousand pound! Yes! but mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Enter 'Squire Richard.

'Squire Richard.—Feyther, an' you doan't come quickly, the meat will be cowl'd: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady W.—Bless me, Sir Francis! you are not going to sup by yourself?

Sir Fran.—No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady W.—Had not you as good stay a little, my dear? We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran.—Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Manly.—By no means, Sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran.—Well, sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Manly.—You'll excuse me, madam——

Lady W.—Since you have business, sir. (Exit Manly.)

Enter Mrs. Motherly.

Oh, Mrs. Motherly! you were saying, this morning, you had some very fine lace to show me—can't I see it now?

(Sir Francis stares.)

Mrs. Motherly.—Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it, for the birthday; but your ladyship——

Lady W.—Oh, I die if I don't see it before her!

'Squire R.—Woant you goa, feyther?

Sir Fran.—Waunds, lad, I shall ha' no stomach, at this rate!

Mrs. M.—Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and, for fineness, no cobweb comes up to it.

Sir Fran.—Odds guts and gizzard, madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb? Why, what the devil's that to cost, now?

Mrs. M.—Nay, if Sir Francis does not like it, madam——

Lady W.—He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran.—Flesh, madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

Lady W.—No doubt on't. Think of your thousand a year, and who got it you; go eat your dinner, and be thankful, go! (Driving him to the door) Come, Mrs. Motherly.

(Exit Lady Wronghead with Mrs. Motherly.)

Sir Fran.—Very fine! so here I must fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out a hundred pounds a day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honor of my family! Odd flesh! things had need go well at this rate!

'*Squire R.*—Nay, nay—come, feyther.

(Exeunt Sir Francis and 'Squire Richard.)

Enter Myrtilia.

Myrtilia.—(To Miss Jenny.) Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come, and assist her fancy in some of the new laces

Count B.—(Coming forward.) We'll wait upon her—

Jenny.—(Coming forward.) So, I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

Count B.—No matter, my dear: you know she has asked me to stay supper: so, when your papa and she are abed, Mrs. Myrtilia will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr.—Ay, ay, madam, you may command me in anything.

Jenny.—Well, that will be pure!

Count B.—But you had best go to her alone, my life; it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny.—Ay, so it will: and to-morrow, you know, at the masquerade: and then!— (Exit.)

Myr.—So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

Count B.—Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr.—Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count B.—Oh, she's mad for the masquerade!—it drives like a nail;—we want nothing now but the parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr.—Yes, yes, my Lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine at the same time.

Count B.—Oh, it's true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr.—Why, you know my Lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball night before they go to the Haymarket

Count B.—Good.

Myr.—Now, the doctor proposes we should all come hither in our habits, and, when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to bed together.

Count B.—Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child.

Myr.—And may he tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live.—But I must run to my 'squire.

Count B.—And I to the ladies—so, your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead!

Myr.—Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset!
(Exit.)

Count B.—Why, ay, Count! That title has been of some use to me indeed: not that I have any more pretense to it than I have to a blue ribbon; yet I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality.—But—tempora mutantur—since that damned squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If I can snap up Miss Jenny, and her eight thousand pounds, I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for, since your modern men of fortune are grown wise

enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools, that don't take up the airs of men of quality. (Exit.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's house.

Enter Williams and Mr. Manly.

Williams.—I believe it is Sir Francis Wronghead, sir.

Manly.—Desire Sir Francis to walk in. (Exit Williams.) I suppose, by this time, his wise worship begins to find that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side.

Enter Sir Francis Wronghead.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favor of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Francis Wronghead.—Ah, cousin?

Manly.—Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran.—I have no friend alive but you—

Manly.—I am sorry for that.—But what's the matter?

Sir Fran.—I have played the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife—

Manly.—What of her?

Sir Fran.—Is playing the devil.

Manly.—Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fran.—If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning. But there's one hundred on't goes more to my heart than all the rest.

Manly.—And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran.—Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you.

Manly.—Out with it.

Sir Fran.—Why, she has been at an assembly.

Manly.—What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

Sir Fran.—Why, so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with. But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my Lady Townly here, with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my Lady Noble's assembly, forsooth.—A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnce! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so about four or five in the morning—home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table.

Manly.—All lost at dice!

Sir Fran.—Every shilling—among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Manly.—If you remember, I gave you a hint of this.

Sir Fran.—Why, ay, 'tis true, you did so: but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Manly.—Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran.—Ah, this London is a base place, indeed!—Waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a gaol?

Manly.—Why, truly, there seems to be but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran.—Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Manly.—The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road that brought you hither will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran.—Odds flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a year behind me?

Manly.—Pooh, pooh! Leave anything behind you but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran.—Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure I shall make in the country, if I come down withawt it.

Manly.—You will make a much more lamentable figure in a goal without it.

Sir Fran.—Mayhap, 'at you have no great opinion of my journey to London, then, cousin?

Manly.—Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you, you don't yet see half all the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran.—Good lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Manly.—In one word, your whole affairs stand thus:—In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster: in a fortnight my lady will run you into a gaol, by keeping the best company: in four-and-twenty hours your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she ha'n't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast-off mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran.—I' th' name of goodness, why should you think all this?

Manly.—Because I have proof of it. In short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran.—Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Manly.—Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. I hear company entering.—You know they see masks here to-day—conceal yourself in this room, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran.—Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my lady! my Lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into!

Manly.—Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.
(Sir Francis and Manly retire.)

Enter 'Squire Richard and Myrtila, in masquerade dresses.

'Squire Richard.—What, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myrtila.—Yes, yes, speak softly.

'Squire R.—Well, but where is he?

Myr.—He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn without witnesses: so, when the count

and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

'Squire R.—Well, well, tit for tat; ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr.—And see, here they come!

Enter Count Basset and Miss Jenny, in masquerade dresses.

Count Basset.—So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny.—Well, vow my heart's at my mouth still. I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip! Lawd, do but feel how it beats here? (Laying his hand on her bosom.)

Count B.—Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitacion!

Jenny.—Ay, you say so—but let's see—now—(Laying her hand on his breast.)—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do; and so where's the parson?

Count B.—Mrs. Myrtille, will you be so good as to see if the doctor is ready for us?

Myr.—He only staid for you, sir; I'll fetch him immediately. (Exit.)

Jenny.—Pray, sir, am I not to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

Count B.—No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny.—Oh, lud, how her back will be up then, when she meets me at an assembly: or you and I in our coach-and-six at Hyde Park together?

Count B.—Ay, or when she hears the boxkeepers at an opera call out—The Countess of Basset's servants!

Jenny.—Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um riband, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my Lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I— So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to

my forehead; and away they trot, swing swang, with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing! and—Oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

Count B.—Well, I see that plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of them all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny.—Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

'Squire R.—Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! Thof', in my mind, an' there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a rope makes the parson stay so?

Count B.—Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter Myrtilla, with a Constable.

Constable.—Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here?

Myrtilla.—That's the gentleman. (Pointing to the Count.)

Count B.—Hey-day! what, in masquerade, doctor?

Const.—Doctor! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but if you are called Count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count B.—What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const.—Only my lord Chief Justice's warrant against you, for forgery, sir.

Count B.—Blood and thunder!

Const.—And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately. (Sir Francis and Manly advance.)

Jenny.—Oh, dear me, what's the matter? (Trembling.)

Count B.—Oh, nothing; only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

'Squire R.—Oh, oh, is that all?

Sir Fran.—No, sirrah, that is not all!

(Sir Francis, coming softly behind the 'Squire, knocks him down with his cane and beats him and Jenny alternately.)

'Squire R.—(Lying on the floor.) Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Manly.—Hold, hold, Sir Francis; have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray, sir.

Sir Fran.—Waunds, cousin, I ha'nt patience.

Count B.—Manly! Nay, then, I am blown to the devil.
(Aside.)

'Squire R.—Oh, my head! my head!

Enter Lady Wronghead, dressed as a shepherdess.

Lady Wronghead.—What's the matter here, gentlemen? For heaven's sake!—What, are you murdering my children?

Const.—No, no, madam; no murder; only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran.—(To Jenny.) And for you, Mrs. Hotupon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pickpocket?

Count B.—So, so, all's out, I find! (Aside.)

Jenny.—Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the count a man of quality, then?

Sir Fran.—Oh, yes, one of the unhanged ones, it seems.

Lady W.—(Aside.) Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business then—slighted for her! I ha'nt patience!—and, for aught I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

Manly.—Mr. Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran.—Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night; for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

Lady W.—Indeed, you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran.—Not stir? Waunds, madam—

Manly.—Hold, sir!—If you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't.

Sir Fran.—Ah, cousin, you are a friend, indeed?

Manly.—(Apart to Lady Wronghead.) Look you, madam: as to the favor you designed me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin.—Now, if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady W.—What do you mean, sir.

Manly.—Why, Sir Francis—shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure

Lady W.—Ha! my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Manly.—What shall I say to Sir Francis, madam?

Lady W.—Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honor, and I am all obedience. (Apart to Manly.)

Manly.—Sir Francis—my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran.—Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Manly.—Come, come, Sir Francis: take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful!—And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count B.—Mr. Manly! sir! I hope you won't ruin me?

Manly.—Did you not forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

Count B.—I see you know the world, and therefore shall not pretend to prevaricate. But it has hurt nobody yet, sir: I beg you will not stigmatize me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir.

Manly.—Look you, sir: I have not much time to waste with you; but if you expect mercy yourself, you must show it to one you have been cruel to.

Count B.—Cruel, sir!

Manly.—Have you not ruined this young woman?

Count B.—I, sir!

Manly.—I know you have; therefore you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

Count B.—Dear sir!

Manly.—No words, sir; a wife or a mittimus.

Count B.—Lord, sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy?

Manly.—A private penance, or a public one—Constable!

Count B.—Hold, sir; since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady as not to give her the preference.

Manly.—It must be done this minute, sir; the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Myr.—Come, sir, don't repine; marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

Count B.—Ay, but the worst of the match, too, is the devil.

Manly.—Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it, as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds, to begin a new honeymoon with
(Gives it to Myrtilla.)

Count B.—Sir, this is so generous an act—

Manly.—No compliments, dear sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him.
(Exit.)

Const.—Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count B.—Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however. And I am not the first of the fraternity who has run his head into one noose to keep it out of another.—Come, spouse.

Myr.—Yes, my life.

(Exeunt Myrtilla, Count, and Constable.)

Sir Fran.—And that I may be sure my family's rid of him forever—come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witnesses of the ceremony. (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

A Dressing-room.

Lady Townly discovered as just up sitting at her dressing-table, *Mrs. Trusty* writing.

Mrs. Trusty.—Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so ill?

Lady Townly.—How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Mrs. T.—Dear me! it was so long before you rung! Madam, I was in hope your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady T.—Composed! why, I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Mrs. T.—Indeed, madam, it is a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady T.—Oh, you are quite mistaken, *Trusty*! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over fond of my lord—yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Mrs. T.—Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady T.—Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, *Trusty*?

Mrs. T.—Mercy forbid, madam?

Lady T.—Broke, ruined, plundered!—stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Mrs. T.—You don't tell me so, madam!

Lady T.—And where to raise ten pound in the world. What is to be done, Trusty?

Mrs. T.—Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam; but maybe your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady T.—But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Mrs. T.—Ha! that's a bad business, indeed, madam. Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late—

Lady T.—Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Mrs. T.—Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady T.—Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to a—what's his filthy name?

Mrs. T.—Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr. Lute-string, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady T.—The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately. (Exit Trusty.) Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine against poor seven, forever! No, after that horrid bar of my chance—that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake. Sit up all night—lose all one's money—dream of winning thousands—wake without a shilling! and then (Looking amazed in her glass)—how like a hag I look! in short, the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder. If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous. If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight—but I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Mrs. T.—Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr. Lute-string was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair

foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady T.—Run to the staircase head again—and scream to him that I must speak to him this instant.

(Mrs. Trusty runs out and speaks.)

Mrs. T.—(Without.) Mr. Poundage! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly!

Pound.—(Without.) I'll come to you presently.

Mrs. T.—(Without.) Presently won't do, man; you must come this minute.

Pound.—(Without.) I am but just paying a little money here.

Mrs. T.—(Without.) Odds my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady, this moment—quick!

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Lady T.—Will the monster come, or no?

Mrs. T.—Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady T.—Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his account—my brain is not able to bear him. (Poundage comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.)

Mrs. T.—Oh, it's well you are come! where's the fifty pounds!

Pound.—Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt below for it.

Mrs. T.—No matter; my lady says you must not pay him with that money; there's not enough, it seems—there's a guinea that's not good in it—besides, there is a mistake in the account too—(Twitching the bag from him.) But she is not at leisure to examine it now; so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady T.—What is all that noise there? (Noise without.)

Pound.—Why, an it please your ladyship—

Lady T.—Pr'ythee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound.—Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam.

(Exit.)

Mrs. T.—There they are, madam. (Pours the money out of the bag.) The pretty things were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hands, I protest it made me tremble for them!—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—Thank you, ma'am. (Takes a guinea.)

Lady T.—Why, I did not bid you take it.

Mrs. T.—No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady T.—Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, we may compound for a little of his ill-humor.

Mrs. T.—I'll listen.

Lady T.—Pr'ythee do.

Pound.—(Without.) Well, but Mr. Lutestring—

Lutestring.—(Without.) I tell you, I insist—

Pound.—(Without.) Well, but can't you call next week, Mr. Lutestring.

Lute.—(Without.) I'll be made a fool of no longer, Mr. Poundage; and if you don't pay me my money—

Pound.—(Without.) Bless my soul, Mr. Lutestring, sure you won't—

Lute.—(Without.) Indeed, but I will, though! I won't swear, but, if I leave this house without my money, I'll be damned, that's all.

Mrs. T.—Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage. Bless me! I believe he'll beat him. Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady T.—And a sober citizen, too! that's a shame.

Mrs. T.—Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—maybe the porter has knocked him down—I'll step and see. (Exit.)

Lady T.—These tradespeople are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them!

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Mrs. T.—Oh, madam! undone—undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over.—If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady T.—No matter: it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Mrs. T.—Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

Lady T.—Do you get out of the way, then. (Exit Mrs. Trusty.) I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give them me.

Enter Lord Townly.

Lord T.—How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house for money due to him from you?

Lady T.—You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence?

Lord T.—I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it: I thought I had given you money three months ago to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady T.—Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord T.—Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus—what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady T.—Gone.

Lord T.—Gone! what way, madam?

Lady T.—Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord T.—'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady T.—(Rising.) In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord T.—(Rising and advancing.) Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady T.—Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord T.—Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more before I part with you.

Lady T.—My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I assure you.

Lord T.—Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous!— you have neither honor, worth, nor innocence to support it.

Lady T.—You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord T.—After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady T.—I scorn your imputation and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart is your monitor—'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded; you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord T.—Death! madam, do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed—for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more;—if she conceals her shame, does less; and sure the dissolute life you avow as sorely wrongs my honor and my quiet. (Walks about.)

Lady T.—I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord T.—Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you in yourself had seen her—I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me whether a black ace or a powdered cockcomb has possession of it.

Lady T.—If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

Lord T.—That, madam, I have long despaired of; and, since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit that, with our hearts, our persons too should separate.—This house you sleep no more in; though your content might grossly feed upon the

dishonor of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady T.—Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honor!

Lord T.—Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments. I have done with you.

Lady T.—Done with me! If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it—but have a care: I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord T.—Recalled!—who's there?

(*Lady Townly retires back.*)

Enter Williams.

Desire my sister and Mr. Manly to walk up. (*Exit Williams.*)

Lady T.—(*Returning.*) My lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord T.—'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible; and, though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady T.—I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord T.—Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady Grace and Mr. Manly.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Manly.—Then, pray make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord T.—Sister, I have the same excuse to entreat of you, too.

Lady G.—To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord T.—Thus, then—as you both were present at my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation.—I know, sir, your good nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you; but, as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so, I hope, you are conscious that an ill woman can't reproach you if you are silent on her side.

Manly.—My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lord T.—For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocation of my parting with you—the world, I fear, is too well informed of them.—For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter.—As the Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and, to our mutual shame I speak it, more than happy wives desire. But those indulgencies must end—state, equipage, and splendor, but ill become the vices that misuse them. (Lady Grace quits her position and stands close on the right of Lady Townly.) The decent necessities of life shall be supplied, but not one article of luxury—not even the coach, that waits to carry you from hence, shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my Lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time, and your condition, bring you a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased; but if you still are lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less; nor will I call that soul my friend that names you in my hearing.

Lady G.—My heart bleeds for her!

(*Aside.*)

Lord T.—Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time when I believed that form incapable of vice or of decay; there I proposed the partner of an easy home; there I forever hoped to find a cheerful companion, a faithful friend, a useful helpmate, and a tender mother—but, oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Manly.—The world is different in its sense of happiness: offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

Lord T.—Fear me not.

Manly.—This last speech, I see, has struck her! (*Aside.*)

Lord T.—No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart forever), let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal:—and, as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fall of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion raised against the honor of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her fame that justice.

Lady T.—Oh, sister! (Turns to Lady Grace, weeping.)

Lord T.—When I am spoken of, where without favor this action may be canvassed, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. (Going.)

Lady T.—Support me—save me—hide me from the world!
(Falling on Lady Grace's neck.)

Lord T.—(Returning.) I had forgot—you have no share in my resentment; therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honor of an injured husband. (Offers to go out.)

Manly.—(Interposing.) My lord, you must not, shall not, leave her thus!—One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong. If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something laboring in her mind, that, would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

Lord T.—Consider—since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady T.—Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult: and undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But, as you've called in friends to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord T.—I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady T.—My lord, you ever have complained I wanted love; but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another, so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

Manly.—This, my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord T.—Proceed—I am attentive.

Lady T.—Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty: which, at my glass, my

youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves—I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that, when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even there declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth—his tender care, my lord, directed him to you—our hands were joined, but still my heart was wedded to its folly:—My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures. The husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed. I knew no directors, but my passions; no master, but my will. Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, were pleased with my delights; nor then foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence. And though I call myself ungrateful while I own it, yet, as a truth, it cannot be denied, that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings, and, in a heart thus warm in wild, unthanking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord T.—Oh, Manly, where has this creature's heart been buried? (Apart.)

Manly.—If yet recoverable, how vast the treasure! (Apart.)

Lady T.—What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession; my errors (give them, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended.—No, what's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate—no plea can alter! What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore, till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon. The penance of a lonely, contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserved this separation will strew perpetual thorns upon my pillow. Sister, farewell! (Kissing her.) Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me; but when you think I have atoned my follies past, persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord T.—No, madam! your errors, thus renounced, this instant are forgotten! Long-parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their

meeting: but from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces.
(Run into each other's arms.)

Lady T.—What words—what love—what duty can repay such obligations?

Lord T.—Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady T.—Oh, till this moment, never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you!

Lord T.—By heaven, this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake of my felicity—my new-born joy! See here! the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady G.—Sister, (for now methinks that name is dearer to me than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Manly.—Long, long, and mutual may it flow!

Lord T.—To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady T.—Sister, a day like this—

Lady G.—Admits of no excuse against the general joy.

(Gives her hand to Manly.)

Manly.—A joy, like mine—despairs of words to speak it.

Lord T.—Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother!
(Embracing him.)

Manly.—Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Lady T.—Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days.

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shall lead,
For, in the marriage state, the world must own,
Divided happiness was never known.
To make it mutual, nature points the way:
Let husbands govern; gentle wives obey. (Exeunt.)

Though one of the most famous dramatists of his day, Vanbrugh was better known as an architect, and especially as the architect of Blenheim Castle, which subjected him to the sarcasms of Swift, Walpole and others. "A hollowed quarry" they called it; but the composition and its artificer were commended by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose eulogy far outweighed the censure of the critics. The truth is, that Vanbrugh made use too freely of literary ideas, which should be used but sparingly in the plastic arts. Moreover, he was lacking in combination, and though parts of his work were impressive, the effect of the whole was feeble. Nevertheless, with all his faults, he was the favorite architect of his day, receiving the patronage of royalty and of the nobility. In addition to Blenheim and Castle Howard, he built a number of country mansions, among which were Grimsthorpe and Duncombe Hall in Yorkshire, King's Weston, near Bristol, and Pulton Hall.

